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THE WIFE

AND

WOMAN'S REWARD.

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THE WIFE

AND

WOMAN'S REWARD

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1835.

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WOMAN'S REWARD.

CHAPTER I.

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise,
(That last infirmity of noble minds),
To scorn delights, and live laborious days.

LYCIDAS.

Bold, handsome, able, if he chose to please,
Punctual and right in common offices,
He lost the sight of conduct's only worth—
The scattering smiles on this uneasy earth.

RIMINI.

PARLIAMENT opened, and Mary saw less of Clavering and her brother than formerly; and while *they* necessarily became more intimate, meeting, as they did, at idle moments at Mrs.

Bolton's, and daily in the House of Commons, the dislike which Lionel had conceived for Clavering did not appear to diminish. They had a new subject of dissension, in the difference of their political opinions, Clavering being more liberal than most of the members of his own party, and Lionel less so than many of those with whom he was associated.

Both spoke; both were considered "rising men;" and Lionel's extreme youth made him a sort of lion among his friends. His speeches were bold, fluent, and brilliant; he sometimes indulged in a strain of bitter and successful irony, and often in personalities which just (and only just) avoided the bounds which, when passed, allow even a "member of the Lower House" (who is doomed to hear quietly much that he would fain resent) to be offended. This is a style loudly cheered *in* the house) but little liked out of it. People will approve of much

in an hour of excitement, which their cooler judgments afterwards condemn; and bitterness, while it is temporarily the most successful, is, in fact, the most impolitic of styles; for the very eloquence by which a man crushes his enemies, and grinds them, as it were, to powder, also gives his friends an impression of insecurity, of want of temper, of imperiousness, of all which makes a man unpopular with his own party, and makes that party dread his very talents, as giving him a chance of becoming their leader.

The politician whose power lies rather in stinging his opponents, than in winning those of his own side, is generally in the long run unsuccessful. Lionel carried this style even to exaggeration: his very attitude partook of it. The folded arms, the haughty head, the flashing eye, added to the withering force of his sneer; and he stood aloof from, and regardless of, his

friends, as if it were for the indulgence of his own hate, and not in their service, that he thus swept down those who opposed him.

During the whole of his career, though he made a hundred bitter and irreconcileable foes, he never conciliated a human being.

Clavering avoided this error, not from wisdom or policy, but because his mind was naturally free from bitterness or party feeling. He addressed his opponents with the hope of convincing; he believed conviction *possible*. He never uttered a sentence, of the truth of which he was not himself thoroughly convinced.—Conscious of the honesty of his own intentions, he believed in the honesty of other men; he spoke *to* them, not *at* them; he spoke, not for one party against another party, but as a man *should* speak, in a great deliberative assembly, TO ALL; believing all, however divided in opinion, equally anxious to decide for the truth.

And herein lies much of the secret of true eloquence.

It is true, his speeches were listened to with less apparent enthusiasm than Lionel's; but they were heard also with more fixed attention: he was less cheered, but he was better remembered; and "it is Clavering's opinion"—"you know Clavering said the other night"—grew to be familiar phrases with the young members of the house, and their best weapon of contradiction. He was already, in fact, what fate intended he should become—the leader of a party. The rich and rolling voice—the attitude, in which there was as much of appeal as of majesty—the frank and honest brow—had their effect (and let no man imagine that these merely personal advantages have *not* their effect,) on the assembly he was addressing. A man thought it a compliment to be told he had "caught something of Clavering's man-

ner." He was loved; he was looked up to: and while Lionel was still alternately dazzling and displeasing, William Clavering had grown to be a person of some weight and influence; one on whose future, calculations were made; a valuable *card* to the Whig party; one whom men consulted, or to whom they confided their political sentiments and unsettled theories.

And there was no man so dull in explanation that Clavering did not comprehend his meaning: no man so ignorant upon general points, but that Clavering found in his hints something that might be made useful. He was not only the best speaker, and the cleverest man among them, but he was also the most attentive listener, and the most indulgent judge of other men's talents.

The greatest orator of the day alluded to a passage in one of Clavering's speeches, as the readiest mode of conveying to the minds of

his hearers what he meant to say; and all the wives of the Whig noblemen fell in love with him; and poor Mary, as she sate in the quiet drawing-room, reading the newspaper to Mrs. Bolton, felt as if a sudden barrier had been placed between her and her lover, so immeasurably great had he become in the eyes of the great world.

But the temptations of glory, the flatteries of fashion, and the tutored smiles of women of the world, had no effect on Clavering's heart. He was ambitious: he desired to do good: he was not insensible to the pleasure of popularity; but for the rest, it touched him not. He loved Mary as ardently, and thought her as superior to the rest of her sex now, in the midst of public applause, and private temptations, as when in the cold fogs of a London November, he walked down the

crowded Strand from his chambers in the Temple, to forget the toils and tasks of the day, in the pleasure of her gentle converse and kind smile; and to remember as he did so, that he himself was forgotten by the few who flattered him when he was a young and idle lad, and had not begun to "study hard at the law." Nay, he loved her better.

There is something in the bustle and excitement of a public career, that makes a man set a higher value on his quiet hours. There is no one so domestic as your thorough man of business: there is no one so glad to unbend and relax as your stern politician. And Clavering, when that gentle, and yet joyous welcome stole on his ear, after the cheers and the murmurs, the struggle and the triumph of a long night's debate, felt as a traveller, who, after long journeying over stony streets and dusty roads, flings himself down on the green

turf, and listens to the rippling of a broad and even stream.

"Before I see him again," thought Mary, as the door closed on his receding figure, the last day they were in town—"before I see him again, I will tell Lionel how matters stand between us; it is foolish to shrink from speaking of him as I do. He will get into a habit of disliking William; and they are to be brothers—yes, brothers! I will teach Lionel what to love in Clavering, and warn Clavering when to bear with Leo. He does not consider enough how unused Leo is to contradiction. I should have spoken more familiarly of one to the other. This foolish woman's shrinking, how it ties one's tongue!"

In the quiet of Moreton Park, Mary had many opportunities of carrying on her plans of teaching her brother what to love in Mr. Clavering, but he learned very slowly; a deep-

rooted jealousy seemed to have taken possession of his heart, and the evident preference which his sister felt for the society of this obnoxious individual, embittered Lionel more and more against him. Meanwhile, in the very jealousy and fear of another sharing or diverting that affection, which had been so prodigally expended hitherto on himself alone, Lionel became more anxious to please his sister. He always asserted, that she could do anything with him; and she certainly could do more than any one else. She repressed his extravagance, made him appear thoughtful in his generosity, and discriminating in his preferences; reminded him of the half-forgotten and very much neglected voters of A——; discovered that a light iron fence ought to be substituted for a shabby paling, in order to raise a smile of satisfaction on the countenance of the discontented Trueman; was astonished

at the growth of the Prudhoe children, and worked a lace cap for Mrs. Hemings' expected baby. Then she had her school, which was called *his* school; and her pensioners, who were called *his* pensioners; and rewards which *he* had ordered her to distribute; and a thousand little studied ways of making him popular in the neighbourhood; and popular he decidedly was. No one knew him well, and as he was an object of immense admiration to the mammas and young ladies of the neighbourhood, was liked in his own set, and among the hunting squires, and never had his will contradicted, or his vanity left without fuel, he preserved his good humour, and nobody saw what his faults were.

Jack Conolly, as usual, came to pay him a visit, with a stock of new songs and stories; an actual income of his own, (an aunt had died and left him twenty thousand pounds):

and a preference for Mary, which remained in full force, in spite of the very few glimpses he had caught of her in London.

Like all very selfish people, who *will* please you with *their* pleasure, Lionel had bought Mary a spirited and beautiful horse, and insisted on her being a capital horsewoman. Mary was not timid, at least she was not afraid of being thrown and killed; but she was rather bored with having to ride so much. She wanted the joyousness, the buoyancy of spirit, which that exercise requires. She was essentially a quiet person; and scouring the country with Sopsy, Mad Jack, and the Lark, when she wished to sit at home, reading books Clavering had marked, or raising Madeira seeds in the conservatory, was to her a *gêne* and a discomfort. Nevertheless she obeyed the whim, as she did all those in which Lionel

indulged; and though she never carried her enthusiasm so far as to talk of lame hocks and diseased pasterns, as some ladies do, she yet became fond of Narcissus (who certainly deserved his name), and actually painted his picture herself, and hung it in her dressing-room, from whence Lionel triumphantly removed it into the dining-room, remarking to Jack Conolly, as he did so, that Mary was at last getting into "their ways."

Day by day Mr. Conolly became more enamoured of the person to whom his "ways" seemed so strange, and the increased coldness of her manner to him (for ever before Mary's eye rose the beautiful face of the lovely Mrs. Reid), he attributed to her guessing in some measure the sentiments she had inspired. Jack Conolly, who was generally so confident, was actually afraid to declare himself; and so matters stood, till one day, when Mary was

standing in the garden, watering some geraniums, news was brought by the alarmed housekeeper, that her young master had had a fall, out hunting, was dreadfully hurt, and wished his sister and Mr. Conolly, to come to him immediately.

Mary flew to his room in agony of fear.

The only words he spoke were, "I'm going, my poor girl;—I'm dying!" and then the surgeon, (who had luckily been of the hunting party,) enjoined silence.

Lionel had received some internal hurt, which brought on a spitting of blood; but the doctors who were hastily summoned, as well as a London physician of celebrated skill, all assured Mary that care, quiet, and a short residence at Hastings, would restore him.

To Hastings they accordingly went; and Jack Conolly, who had been most kind and

active all through his illness, declared he would also go there for an idle month, that Lionel might not get into low spirits about himself; and that Mary might have some one who would in part relieve her from the anxiety of constant watching.

He came every day while they were there, and Mary could not but own, that a more useful, attentive, and apparently affectionate friend, her brother could not have. He learnt all that was going on; received amusing letters every day, and read them aloud; knew what fresh publications to send for from town, and was a real resource to Lionel, and a service to Mary, who could thus indulge in a solitary stroll on the sea-shore or the surrounding country, without the anxiety of knowing she left her beloved brother in the hands of servants.

She had written in great agony to Clavering when the accident first happened, not thinking that Lionel would so rapidly recover as proved the case. The letter followed him to his father's place, (for his study of the law had relaxed, since his parliamentary career began,) and he immediately came down to visit young Dupré and his sister.

"This is really kind, Clavering," said the invalid, his eye brightening with a cordiality rarely shown towards the individual he addressed; and pleased alike with the attention and with the refreshment of seeing a new face; (for Mr. Dupré belonged to that unhappy class of people who are easily bored).

It was agreed that Lionel was much better; and the evening previous to Clavering's departure from Hastings, it was also agreed, (on the persuasion of Jack Conolly, who loved a

lark,) that the first trial of strength should be made by a visit to the little theatre, where, as Mr. Conolly said, "if they were not amused by a *good* performance, they would be by a *bad* one."

CHAPTER II.

Thine eyes doe mocke the diamond's blaze,
Thy lippes doe spoyle the rubie's prayse:
That eye does tempte to love's desyre,
Those false lippes speake in wordes of fyre:
Yet all so fayre but makes me moane,
Syth nought doth saye the hearte of stone!

OLD BALLAD.

THE little theatre to which the party went to wile away an idle hour, was excessively crowded. A London singer of considerable reputation was to perform the principal character, and the heroine (if they might judge by the size of the type in which "the part of Phœbe,

by Miss Fitzharris," was printed,) was a prodigious favourite.

The curtain did not draw up immediately, and the audience, (many of whom had been sitting there for a considerable time, owing to their anxiety to secure good places,) showed the usual signs of ill-humour. Quieted by an exceedingly ill-played overture, they sate with a renewed stock of patience; and when at length the piece began, vociferously applauded a song addressed to the beauty of the rising sun, by several individuals intended for a group of Swiss peasantry, and consequently supplied alternately with brown jackets and blue garters, and blue jackets and red garters, with female costumes to correspond.

After the rising sun had been duly appreciated in verse, and the blue hills in the distance mentioned in prose, the gentleman from London appeared, and having bowed two or

three times in grateful acknowledgment of the welcome he received at the hands of the Worthing public, clasped his own hands, and enquired in the key of G where his love, his shepherdess, could possibly be. His voice was a very sweet and full tenor; and when he concluded with a prolonged shake on the word "part," in the third repetition of the expressive line

"To die were better than to part from thee,"

the applause and cries of *encore* were so vehement, that it was doubtful whether the audience would ever be further informed as to the present occupation of the fair object of his attachment. Three times did he enquire where his shepherdess was; each time with the same clasping of the hands, and the same shake on the word "part," during which he stretched his arms towards the gallery, and

then despairingly dropped the left, while leaning the right against a tree, he tranquilly awaited the appearance of the person whose coming was supposed to be a pleasing surprise.

Miss Fitzharris, or more properly Phœbe, then appeared on a hill of green steps, attended by two little goats, and Mary Dupré immediately recognized the beautiful woman she had seen nearly two years since, at Lionel's election, the widow, Mrs. Reid!

She came, bounding on the stage, her light figure set off to the utmost advantage by the correctest of peasant's dresses, and her rich golden hair plaited with blue riband down to her waist. Her smile we have already noticed; and sweeter even than her smile was the sound of her laugh: it was like the laugh of a child; so full of merriment and music, that you involuntarily paused as you heard it,

and envied the lightness of heart that could produce it.

There is nothing which is so rarely graceful as laughter: nothing which a pretty woman should more carefully study, or more carefully avoid. We have our beau ideal of a laugh, as of every thing else in this world: it should not be too loud and hearty, nor feeble and affected as a school-girl's titter: it should not distort and convulse the features, and yet it must have a whole heart's gaiety in it: it should not seem forced, as a tribute of acquiescence in our having said "a good thing," and yet it must give the welcome impression that we are ourselves the inspirers, as we are the sharers of that merriment: it should sound kindly, even while it mocks, and not die away in a sneer of bitterness or contempt: it should be low and even; and not

startle the ear into displeased attention. The perfection of a laugh (and it is far easier to say what it should *not* be than what it should,) is to be welcome even to those who do not hear the jest which called it forth: who, hearing the laugh, and the laugh *only*, look round and smile, and return again to their own occupations.

Such is the laugh of a child; — such was the laugh of the soi-disant Miss Fitzharris, who, born of respectable parents, chose rather to follow a fashion common among those of her profession, and print a *nom de guerre* in the play-bills and advertisements, than run the risk of inflicting that worst of pangs, the sudden memory of the disgrace of one beloved.

Mary dared not turn; she dared scarcely breathe: but she thought how bitter must be the feelings of Jack Conolly, who doubtless had deserted the beautiful young widow; or

else why had she left her pretty cottage with all its comforts, to join a company of third-rate comedians? But this is too long a digression.

As we have said, she came bounding on, and startled the musing lover of the piece by a mocking laugh, whose peculiar beauty and merriment elicited a burst of applause.

The young couple then advanced, and prepared to sing a duet. A spirited and lively accompaniment was played, and the eyes of the attentive audience were fixed on the imaginary peasant girl, when she was observed to pause,—to falter,—and remain silent. In vain her Swiss lover spoke in an anxious and under tone,—in vain the prompter prompted,—in vain the musicians repeated the symphony, that she might have time to gain courage. The smile faded from her lovely face; she gave a wild melancholy stare round the house;

and finally, as the mingled storm of encouragement and disapprobation rose from the excited audience, she burst into tears, and was led off the stage.

The curtain was lowered for a moment, and being raised again, a comic song (originally intended to have been introduced between the first and second piece,) was performed, and listened to with tolerable patience. But when the curtain was again dropt, and one of the gentlemen in the Swiss costume came forward to state that Miss Fitzharris was too indisposed to reappear, but that Miss Long (the regular prima donna of the company,) had kindly undertaken to supply her place, the indignation of the audience knew no bounds. Yells, hooting, whistling, groans and exclamations resounded through the house; and when the manager, a pale, fine-looking man, in the dress of a brigand chief, appeared, he was assailed

with hisses and continued yells, while orange-peel and other things were thrown on the stage with a rapidity and violence which compelled him to retreat.

The stage was swept; the well-known and popular air of "John Anderson, my Joe" was played; the gentleman from London again made his appearance; and by the time the second verse of that beautiful song was concluded, you might have heard a pin drop, so still was the previously riotous assembly.

At the close of the song, he briefly appealed to them: begged them to consider that it must be equally against the interest and the wishes of the manager that a circumstance so unfortunate as the illness of Miss Fitzharris should occur: that those who were dissatisfied should have their money returned at the door; and that he hoped they would first hear the manager explain.

A fresh burst of riot (in which, however, applause predominated,) was at length hushed, that the manager might be heard. He spoke under considerable agitation and embarrassment, looked far paler and more alarmed than a bandit chief ought to do, and now and then he paused and cleared his throat, as if affected by the substance of what he had to communicate. At length he wound up a somewhat long and submissive apology, with the following remarkable sentences:—

"Sirs, while the poor player is fretting his hour on the stage, does it never enter your minds to think of his private feelings? Does it never strike you, that perhaps whilst ministering to your amusement, his heart may be grieved, or his body racked with pain; that while you are laughing at a joke he has echoed a hundred times, he may be tired or sad; fear-

ing arrest, or anxious about a dying friend; he may (and there are well-known instances* of this) be standing before you, painted and tinselled for the mockery of the night, and know at that very time that certain death is near at hand, stealing upon him by degrees, and to end at last in agony? Yes, sirs, this is often the player's fate; and in spite of all this he must act. The public who applaud his talents have small compassion for his infirmities; they wait impatiently till he has struggled from his sick-bed, or been liberated from a prison; he *must* appear—sick, sad, and anxious though he be, or he must forfeit his engagement, and with it his means of subsistence.

"Sirs, the appearance of the accomplished

* Mrs. Billington, the celebrated singer, died of a lingering and painful illness, which frequently made the hours spent in the exercise of her profession hours of torture, and which she knew would only terminate with her life.

actress who this night attempted to perform the part of *Phœbe*, has been delayed a week, by a grievous affliction. She nerved herself for her task, she believed herself sufficiently strong to succeed; she has failed, and your disapprobation is excited. But, when I inform you that the poor young creature you have hissed off the stage, buried her child, a beautiful infant of nearly two years old, last Saturday; that she is a friendless stranger, without any ties but that she has lost; when I tell you that the peasant girl whose merry *laugh* you applauded, has wept unceasingly for the last eight days: surely every heart will pity her distress, and feel that their disappointment is light in comparison."

A burst of tumult interrupted him, and he concluded, in a more composed tone—

"I have only further to solicit your indulgence, and to inform you that Mr. S. (the London singer) will introduce "Blue Bonnets,"

"A Health to the King," and the "Soldier's Tear," into the part he is about to perform, in order to compensate in some degree for the loss of Miss Fitzharris's performances."

Applause, hisses, cries of "shame!" and sobs from many of the women, followed this announcement. There were not wanting some in that numerous audience, whose hardened and brutal natures permitted a jest on the discrepancy between the name of *Miss* Fitzharris and the history of a lost child, and roars of "where's the baby's father?" mingled with the whistling, and crying, and clapping of hands, which rose in deafening clamour round the house.

Mary waited not to see the curtain draw up again, nor to judge with what degree of dexterity the London singer would introduce "Blue Bonnets" and the other two songs, into a Swiss hero's part. Faint, and deadly pale,

she turned to Lionel (Clavering had disappeared), and murmured, "take me home; oh! let us go home!"

"Don't be alarmed, my dear Mary," said her brother; "Conolly will see for the carriage. Don't be frightened; we will go immediately."

He spoke not another word. The hand he laid soothingly on her arm trembled and burnt with fever, and Mary reproached herself with having lost her self-possession, at a time when agitation was injurious to *him*.

She waited quietly, and walked steadily to the carriage; but it was with a sick shudder that she shrank from Conolly's offered arm; and entering it without assistance, leaned back in a corner, stifling her tears, that Lionel might not be vexed and worried by a useless display of sorrow.

No one spoke till they reached home, when

Mary sought her own room, and wept unrestrainedly. "Poor thing!" thought she; "poor thing! I will see what can be done for her. I will ask Lionel to give her a sum of money, to establish her in some respectable business. I can spare it myself from my marriage portion. Clavering would approve of it, would rejoice that I had done so. I will visit, and comfort, and advise her."

And then the opinion of *others* chilled back her enthusiasm. What would they say of her visiting a lost creature, a mother who could claim no honest name for her child, a ruined and degraded soul? But the lovely face rose before her, with its sad mournful stare, before that burst of passionate grief electrified the house, and the manager's description of the "merry peasant girl, who had wept unceasingly for eight days"—"the friendless stranger without ties" rang in her ear. Mary knelt and prayed for

the fallen stranger, and when she rose, calm and self-possessed, she had resolved early the next morning to seek out the abode of the actress, and see what could best be done to assist her.

When she descended into the drawing-room, she found Clavering and Lionel together. Conolly was gone. "I waited for you, because I shall not see you to-morrow, as I set off very early for my father's," said her lover. "I hope you have not suffered from your agitation; and here is a gentleman you must persuade to go to rest immediately, for I never saw any one so fagged or worn out in my life."

Lionel shook his head impatiently. "No, no; I must wait for Jack Conolly."

"Is he coming back?" said Mary.

"Yes, he is only gone to make inquiries—," and Lionel stopped short.

"Ah, good, *good* brother!" said Mary, who doubted not that Lionel had been before her in the work of charity; and she fondly pressed his hand. But he returned not the pressure—he groaned: complained of the heat, and cursed his unlucky visit to the playhouse, which he truly affirmed, had thrown him back, and made him feel worse than he had done for many days past.

On the following morning, Mary put into practice the resolutions she had made the previous night. She had little difficulty in finding the lodgings of the new actress; and she stole up the narrow and dirty staircase, under the careless direction of the woman who opened the door, "to go up two pair, and knock at the door on the right."

On this floor were two doors, she knocked at the first, no one replied; at the second, and a man's voice bid her enter, with an asperity

of tone which made her pause. For a moment it crossed her mind that, perhaps, the little actress was not *alone*, and a burning blush crimsoned her cheek; but on the summons to enter being sharply repeated, she obeyed, and found herself in a shabby room with a gaunt, pale, haggard-looking man, who paused in the midst of a painting he was finishing, and remained gazing at her, his pallet and brushes in one hand, and the other leaning on the easel. A wild expression of hope shot over his face, as in a foreign accent he exclaimed, "Madame wish to see some of my poor pictures?"

"No;" said Mary gently; "I want to find —Miss Fitzharris—Mrs. Reid—a lady who was taken ill last night when acting."

"It is the next room, madame," said the poor painter; and he courteously opened the door, and bowed, as Mary retired. She heard

the heavy sigh with which he returned to his work!

Gently and timidly she opened the adjoining door, and beheld the object of her solicitude; her back was turned to Mary, and she was seated on a low chair by a child's cot, her face concealed, and resting on her arms, which were flung across the bed. The boddice of her Swiss costume had been unlaced, and her hair was unplaited and damp with sprinkled water; but these hurried attentions on the part of those who had brought her home from the theatre, were all the symptoms of an attempt to undress her. As she sate then, she had evidently sate all night, and, probably, wept through lonely hours, before she fell into the heavy sleep which now had possession of her.

Mary remained, afraid to move lest that slumber should be broken, and her eyes wan-

dered round the comfortless room. A black bombazine dress hung on a nail in the wainscot; a little table stood near, with a leg propped to make it steady on the uneven floor: on the table were a looking-glass, some bright ribands, similar to those worn in her hair, a rouge-pot, a bottle of oil, and a black crape handkerchief; and under it, a basket half-covered with a black veil, containing a quantity of faded cowslips, an ivory rattle, some broken toys, and an infant's sash. A bed was at the further side of the apartment, and a carpenter's hammer, a rule, and a few nails were lying on the quilt. Mary shuddered, as she fancied that, perhaps, they had lain there since the day of the funeral.

It was not difficult, when the grieving woman awoke, to obtain from her an outline of her story; which, after many sobbing thanks to Mary, and declarations of shame at her own

unworthiness, she related as briefly as possible, and nearly in the following words.—

"I was very young, very young indeed, when I first saw him: I have not yet reached my nineteenth birth-day. I was but fifteen when my father and mother died, and the people I was sent to, were very harsh to me. I had been used to be a spoiled, an only child, and I felt the change bitterly. I met *him* (whose name I will not speak, though he has wronged me sorely) by accident in Hyde Park, while I was carrying my aunt's child for an airing. He stopped and spoke to me, and I soon knew him again, for there is no one like him. He told me he knew me immediately, and I was so pleased, that I sate and cried while he spoke; I told him all, every thing: and that my father's losses had made him a bankrupt, and left me pennyless. We met every day afterwards, and when, at length,

he told me he was about to leave London, I could not bear the thought of the loneliness that would follow—and—I went with him! Oh! madam, I thought he meant to marry me; I did indeed! I was his equal in birth and education, and I saw no reason against it. He told me he must wait till he had more money at command. We waited: he succeeded to a fortune; and he put me into lodgings at the town of A——. That was the first time I thought—I fancied—that he was colder to me. I had then my dear lost baby, but he never cared much about the child, though a lovelier little creature—oh! my baby—my poor Frank!"

Mary waited till the passion of tears had subsided, and the little actress continued more collectedly.

"Let me dress it ever so prettily, he scarcely would look at it, and he had it christened

Frank; he said giving it his own name would make the people of the house suspect me. Well, I thought when the child was a little older he would love it, and he still seemed fond of me; and after that he rented a pretty cottage for me, and tried to make me understand at last, that he could not marry me, because it would disgrace him among his friends. Even that I bore! I feared nothing then but losing him—I felt nothing but my love for him—I think I could have borne to have been pointed at by all the town as his mistress, as long as I knew that he cared for me and me only. He said, though he could not marry *me*, he would never marry any one else—never love any one else. But, oh! madam, the day came when I saw that he was quite tired of me. Every thing I said teased him—I could not amuse—I could not please—I could not interest him; and it was not as if illness had

changed me, and my beauty was gone, *then* I could have looked forward to recovering, or I could, at least, have accounted for his coldness: but it was a bitter thing to look in the glass and see—God knows I do not speak it in vanity—God knows I care little how disfigured I may grow now—but then, *then*, when I was looking for the reason of his change, it was bitter to see that I was as pretty as ever; and feel that the face he had so often praised, had no longer any charm for him. Oh! dear madam, it sounds a foolish sorrow, but to know when one still loves, that the *power* of our beauty is passed——! Well, it is all over now!" and her heavy eyes glanced to the deserted bed of her dead child.

"He left me;" continued she after a dreary pause; "he did not even come to bid me good bye; but sent a friend, with law-papers and settlements, to secure me a small income;

but I refused it all—I flung the deed into the fire; what was money to me then? And even then I could not bring my heart to hate *him*. No, I loved him still! but I hated the cold, cruel man, who had undertaken the task of telling me my fate; who had thought he could arrange it all with a little money—I hated him—oh! *how* I hated him! and I thought that, perhaps, if no one had stood between me and the love of my youth, to make forsaking me *easy;* that he could not—he *could* not—have borne to tell me with his own lips that we must part.

"Well, madam, I walked up to London with my baby. I went straight to my aunt's house. I offered to live with her, as her servant; to put my baby out to nurse, and never see it but when she pleased; it would not do: she turned me from the door with the most contemptuous and shocking names; and I wandered up and down, scarcely in my right senses.

Two or three gentlemen spoke to me, and one or two of the poorer sort of women stopped and asked me kindly whether I was a stranger in London and had lost my way? or if the baby was ill? or what was the matter? But I was so terrified at what had been said by my aunt, that I scarcely heard and could not answer; at last I sat down quite exhausted on the steps of an empty house, and the people passed by me in a sort of dream. I asked one or two to help me, but either I did not speak loud enough to make them hear me, or they would not pity—the rich seldom pity—they feel that *they* only yield to temptation from idleness! Well, at last, towards the evening, a woman passed me, who looked sadly at me; she came back and gave me half a sovereign; and after she had again passed on for a few steps, she again turned back, and said in the sweetest voice I ever heard, 'You

had better come home with me; you cannot pass the night in this way.' That woman, madam, was an actress; and she was thought a light gay creature besides, and knew the wickedness of a great town; but a friend and a mother was she to me, and careful not to let me be tempted while I was with her; and recommended me to the manager of this theatre, who is her brother, and who wishes to marry me, though he knows my story.

"All went on smoothly, though sadly, till the death of my blessed baby; and that nearly broke my heart. Last night I thought I should have been able to act, and wished to do so; for the people have never murmured, but have paid my lodging for me, and pitied me. Even the poor painter in the next room, when he has heard me sob, has come in and read the Bible, and talked to me of the heaven where my child now is. Every body has been kind,

according to their means; and God make me grateful! But when last night I saw *him*—close—close to me—my strength went, my head turned giddy, I could not stand. And even last night, ma'am, even last night, when he heard that his baby was dead—for he *did* hear it—he would not come himself, not even to weep with me; but he sent that friend, that cruel friend, and more money, and more offers, such as I had refused before. Oh! ill as I was, the sight of Mr. Conolly almost killed me!"

A vague, a horrid thought, crossed Mary's mind, as she heard these last words.

"Mr. Conolly is not then your child's father," said she, breathlessly; "not your betrayer? Tell me, tell me quick—name him; I have reasons for asking—I have a right to hear the worst." Then in a low, hoarse tone, she added, "his name is not Lionel?"

"Yes, yes," said the unhappy girl, that *is*

his name—Lionel Dupré. You are his wife, perhaps: oh! forgive me! I won't hate you—I won't, indeed; I am very miserable!"—and she burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"No," said Mary, with unnatural composure, "I am only his sister—*only* his sister, thank God! I came here to help you—to serve you."

A long hysterical scream interrupted her:—the person she addressed fell on her knees, looked up wildly and imploringly in her face, and exclaiming,—"help me! save me! you have forgot me, and I, you; but *I am Annie Morrison!*"—sank in a dead faint at her feet.

Mary looked at her as she fell. She offered no aid—she spoke no word; soul and limb were alike paralyzed. Madeira days came back again; old Morrison toiling up the hot hill, with fruit or books for her dying father; Lionel playing in the garden with his rosy, flaxen-

haired child; and the picture of Annie, as she lay that day on the floor of her shabby room, her golden hair hanging in damp masses round her death-like face, was burnt into Mary's heart till her dying day.

Meanwhile the painter, who had heard the scream and the heavy fall, opened the door, and Mary awoke as from a dream.

"Get a doctor and a nurse," said she, "and stay—you have been kind to her—you have pitied her; there are five pounds for you."

It was more than the poor foreigner had earned by his past month's labour, from sunrise to sunset; and the power of doing good in this instance, and the sight of a cheque in Clavering's name, which Annie told her had been sent to her the previous night, was all the consolation Mary Dupré received on that painful and bewildering day.

CHAPTER III.

Thy yeares are young, thy face is faire,
Thy witts are weake, thy thoughts are greene;
Time hath not given thee leave, as yett,
For to commit so great a sin.

OLD BALLAD.

THE express commands of the physician, that Lionel should avoid agitation and excitement, compelled Mary to keep secret, for the present, the discovery she had made. She contented herself with endeavouring to persuade Annie Morrison to relinquish the profession she had

embraced, and to accept of a sufficient annuity to live comfortably with some respectable family. This, however, was proudly refused.

"There is no *real* disgrace in my profession," said Annie; "it is far, far more honourable than being the pensioned mistress of a man who has deserted me. I know all that you would urge against it; the common prejudice which attributes profligacy and extravagance to the whole class; and which is so false and cruel. A few yield to the temptation which the habit of depending on uncertain and unequal resources holds out, and a few to the flatteries which idle and hot-headed young men are ever ready to bestow on a favourite actress; but there always have been, and always will be, many, many examples of high honour and noble virtue amongst them. I am already lost in the eyes of the few who know me, or care

what is become of me; and I have no father's heart to break now."

She paused, much affected; and continued, in a more faltering tone—"Besides, there is an excitement in the constant, every-day employment, which supports me. I shall die if I must sit idle, thinking over past days."

"No," said Mary, gently, "you would learn where to look for consolation, and the peaceful consciousness of pleasing God would be far better than the ague-fits of excitement and depression which you look forward to."

"It is of no use," said Annie Morrison, as she mournfully shook her head; "I cannot *feel* what you say; I have not been brought up to think in that manner."

"For one month, Annie; promise me to live quietly for one month, and not to act during that time, and you shall hear from me."

A wild and searching expression shot into the beautiful eyes of Lionel's forsaken love, as she gazed on Mary Dupré while she uttered these words. Then a bitter smile stole round her mouth, and she said, "You dream—you fancy he could be persuaded to marry me—you, who have lived in the world!"

"I have *not* lived in the world," said Mary, "and I thank God for it, if its experience was to shew me that nothing right, or just, or natural, can be accomplished there. You are the orphaned child of my father's friend; (and a kind friend he was to us all)—what else you are, let Lionel himself answer for. You might have been a rich man's wife, you might have had a happy home, *but for him;* let the world answer that."

Annie wept bitterly, and, kissing the kind hand extended to her, she murmured, "I will do what you wish; I will wait that month:

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but, oh! *I* know and feel that *that* is impossible: and even if it *could* come to pass, Lionel would only reproach me. He is proud—he stands in the world's eye—he would bear no slight shown to himself through me; we should both be miserable. I had rather bear my misery *alone*."

It was some time after they had returned to town, that Mary at length ventured to break the subject to her brother. He received the news of her having discovered Mrs. Reid's true history without surprise or emotion.

"I thought as much," said he, "from the coldness and embarrassment of your manner ever since. I believe you may recollect that I particularly requested you to make no further inquiries about that person."

"You did, Leo; and you also voluntarily gave me the impression, that she was an object of interest to Mr. Conolly, and not to

you. Ah! *then* I understood not the feeling which prompted you to pass me on the day of the election without notice, and to frown back the eager face of poor Annie, who was glorying in your triumph. You feared my finding out that dreadful story; you *lied* to me then, Lionel."

"Well, and may I ask if you suppose I should have told you the truth? I bid you cease your questions; and now that you *have* discovered the truth, I should like to know what good it has done you?"

"Lionel, if you have a heart in your bosom, do not take this tone with me. To myself nothing but bitter sorrow can arise, from learning the cruel deceit you have practised: but good *may* result to Annie. I speak to you not in my own person," continued she, solemnly, "I speak to you with the voice of our dead father—from his far and foreign

grave—and I ask, what reparation do you mean to make to the ruined child of a true friend—the playfellow of your infancy, the daughter of the man who treated you as a son, whom he loved and was proud of? I ask you, what worldly rule can support or comfort you, when you look back to the day when you first met her in England, as innocent, if not as happy, as the child she carried in her arms, and persuaded her that you *remembered* that beautiful face, and only spoke to her as an old friend? I ask you, do you intend to allow the mother of your child, the daughter of good Joe Morrison, to become a strolling actress?"

"For Heaven's sake, cease this persecution, Mary! What is past is past; she will accept nothing from me, and there's an end of it."

"She will not accept money.—But you can marry her."

"Marry her! Good God, Mary! are you mad? Marry her!" Then in a tone of bitter contempt he added, "What sort of wife do you think the woman would make who *could* turn strolling actress?"

"Her sins are on *your* head, Lionel," said Mary, in a more excited tone than she had ever before spoken: "You will not then repair the wrong you have done her?"

"Not in that way. Nothing should induce me to marry her."

"Then may Heaven forgive you, brother!" said Mary; and she left him to reflect upon the scene which had taken place between them.

She wrote to Annie to release her from her promise of not pursuing her original intention. She added a few words of advice, begged she would apply to her in any emergency, and enclosed a cheque for five hundred pounds,

which she entreated her to accept if she valued the peace of mind of the writer.

Annie Morrison returned an immediate answer to this letter. She said she felt much relieved at being able to act, for that her spirits were very low since Mary's departure, and concluded in these words:—

"I feel all you have done for me, and shall never forget it. I *knew* that in your last effort you would fail, and it was no blow to me, but rather a *repose*, to feel that all was over for ever and ever between us. If he ever speaks of that night, say that I never reproached or spoke unkindly of him: and remember me when you pray, for the sake of my father, who so dearly loved yours."

CHAPTER IV.

"Is it then over? all the trust—
The hope—of my confiding years?
Must I still dwell with thee, and learn
To doubt alike thy smiles and tears?
Oh! better far at once to part—
Farewell, false heart! Farewell, false heart!"

"And can it be my brother,—my own Lionel, from whose lips I have heard these cold and cruel words?" thought Mary, as she found herself alone, and allowed her thoughts to wander back to old days. "Is this the brother of my youth? Is this cold calculating man of

the world—this betrayer of the unprotected; my noble-hearted father's son? And that his victim should be Annie Morrison!—Annie with whom his earliest feelings were shared—with whom his childish tears were shed—who has sat and sorrowed with him over the death of a pet bird,—whose slight frame has shaken with impotent indignation, when a harsh or capricious word spoken by others has wounded his impetuous spirit! Have I lived to see—not one transient trace of emotion pass over his cold and chiselled features when in the public gaze that head bowed down in resistless despair which had pillowed itself in confidence on his bosom? Have I lived to hear him deny her right to be the wife of him who alone tempted her to sin? And her claims are disallowed because of the ridicule of the world—that world of whose admiration for him I was so proud;—that false cold world in

which selfishness only is encouraged; where honesty is thought folly, and disinterestedness insanity! Is there then nothing so fearful as the world's ridicule?—The displeasure of God, —the ruin of a fellow creature's happiness!—Are these nothing in comparison?

"And this young disciple of the world outdoes his masters! That night, when the selfish were interested, the frivolous were saddened,—when Mr. Conolly's agitation was in my eyes a new proof of his unworthiness, Lionel's profile alone was turned from the stage; —*he* could yet command his countenance, and in a soft but steady tone beg *me* not to be alarmed, not to be agitated.!"

In such broken and miserable reflections did Mary pass the evening and night after her vain explanation with her brother. Such was the sudden revulsion of feeling produced by finding a boundary to her power over him, at

the moment when she most desired to exert it, that in a moment she seemed to *un*live years of cherished recollections.

But it was not without a severe struggle that even to herself she could admit a doubt of the long cherished creed of her mind, and could consent to think ill of her brother.

"And though she knew not exactly how to excuse him, yet the constant habit of finding excuses where others could find none; the ingenuity of her devoted and clinging love, made her dwell anxiously after a while, on those features of the case which bore against Annie Morrison. Native delicacy and reserve made the prejudice against acting very strong in Mary's mind. She remembered Lionel's speech, "What sort of a wife would the woman make who *could* turn strolling actress?" and she thought perhaps Annie was even from the first too bold,—perhaps more easily

won than woman should be. She strove to forget the innocent and fond expression of the countenance of her who had related that tale of guilty love. She strove to forget the touching words "*tell him I never—never reproached or spoke unkindly of him.*" She strove to think with Lionel,—with the world. Alas! how many women have striven, like Mary, to warp their own sense of right and wrong, and learn to *think* ill, rather than think ill of any one they love.

Meanwhile Lionel was not indifferent to the fate of one he had loved, though with a vain and selfish passion. He thought often and sadly of her; and was frequently visited by that strange inclination felt by many who have some cause for secrecy, of talking *near* the subject on which they wish for silence. The shape this desire took with Lionel was, on all occasions to decry the profession of the stage.

Clavering had been quoting to Mary and her brother the opinion upon some matter of taste, of a friend of his own, a favourite actor and an accomplished man.

"And you took his opinion?" said Lionel. "These fellows are very well in their proper place, with a barrier of gas *before*, and a prompter *behind* them. But let them, as Hamlet has it, "say no more than is set down for them." They should be no more allowed to *talk*, than to wear their tinsel, *off* the stage; as Churchill, their own bard, has it,—

> 'To see these *things*, the lowest sons of earth,
> Presume, with self-sufficient knowledge graced,
> To rule in letters, and preside in taste.'

"You will recollect," said Clavering, "that what you are quoting from Churchill is called his apology:—that it was written in the most

irritable moment of that most irritable man's life, because the justice of his criticism was not as generally acknowledged as the brilliancy of his wit was admired. But had it not been for the 'Rosciad,' comparatively few would now have heard of Churchill himself. It was the evanescent glory the passing players gained which has given immortality to the poet."

"If you are ready to allow the men to be apt critics of the productions they can just repeat by rote, perhaps you also believe the women to be peculiarly susceptible of those feelings of which they daily assume the appearance. Does your credulity extend to the refined sensibility of actresses?"

"Oh, why not?" interrupted Mary: "How unjust, Lionel. I am sure"——

She was going to add, "I am sure I knew one whom you ought to know can feel;" but she checked herself, and only said, "I believe

women's feelings are little altered by their artificial position."

"I believe in both—the talents of actors and the feelings of actresses," rejoined Clavering. "No one but *must* feel exalted by an attempt to personify the noblest creations of genius; this is of course, considering the art in an abstracted sense. I cannot now presume," added he, looking at Mary, "to say how far some of the incidents of the *coulisses* may counterbalance these advantages."

"No; and of course," said Lionel, "we are humbly to submit, and to believe in the modesty and retiring delicacy of the woman whose acting, and whose ancle—

> 'To clap or hiss, all have an equal claim,
> The cobbler's and his lordship's right the same.'

I must, however, beg leave to doubt the fact of any modest and feeling woman, being *able* to carry on this trade in the passions, this

export and import of different sensations—this exchange of loud mock heroics, for private confessions of admiration,—uncorrupted."

"These are most mercantile and business-like metaphors," said Clavering, "but they convince not me."

Lionel reddened, at the uniutentional sneer conveyed in the last sentence, but he speedily recovered himself.

Clavering was quite unconscious of what he had said; and Mary, who remarked the passing emotion, in her anxiety to think well of her brother, was induced to attribute it to a more creditable feeling.

Clavering continued. "Even if I admitted the truth of your simile, a prize-fighter is not in less excellent training—less athletic—less capable of avenging a personal insult with success, because he is prepared and brought into that state—for *profit*, and not for *passion*.

I do not mean that the individual Miss A. is more likely really to be in love with that identical Mr. B., because she pretends to be so night after night, for the two shillings of the cobbler and seven shillings of his lordship, if you will have it so. But that a profession, which requires the cultivation of the mind and study of the heart, is as likely to produce a fine creature, and to form a character as calculated to excite our sympathies, as hemming household linen, or teaching A B C to infant schools. Indeed, there are many characters it would be impossible to act at all, unless the person had the feelings, as well as the skill necessary to represent them. You may depend upon it, that many a woman applauded for what is termed fine acting, feels every line of it to her heart's core, and, perhaps, weeps herself over the mimic woes of the heroine she personates."

"Quite a mistake; by repetition, it all becomes mechanical," said Lionel, "for whilst the peculiar tone of 'Remember twelve!' still rings in the ears of the audience, and their murmur of approbation has not yet burst into enthusiastic applause, Belvidere has received her cachmire from her dresser at the wing, has returned the soft pressure of the hand of her attendant admirer, Lord Alfred Arlington, and the 'twelve' she has engaged to *remember*, is the hour, when seated between the said Lord Alfred, and some facetious friend;—(a female Garrick between tragedy and comedy,)—she means to enjoy a slight but convivial repast, in the shape of broiled bones and negus."

A man in love, is amazingly particular about what is said in the presence of the loved one. Clavering disliked the turn the conversation was taking; he did not feel himself licensed to reply in the presence of Mary; he, there-

fore, merely observed, "We shall not agree on this topic. It is easy to turn any thing into ridicule, with the adventitious aid of supposed circumstances and assumed names, but there is no real reason why acting should debase the mind of man or woman, it is merely a representation of what we are in our more fervent and excited moments, or what we should be if not polished and chilled back by the customs of society. Ay, even those long soliloquies and violent gesticulations are natural; it is *we* who lack nature; and as regards the women, though I am no advocate for unequal marriages, as giving unequal chances of happiness, yet we should be unjust to the age in which we live, were we to say that the profession of the actress had proved incompatible with the virtues and duties of the wife."

"Upon my word," interrupted Lionel, "I

am not on even terms with you; it is evident you either are, or have been, in love with an actress."

"No;" said Clavering, musingly; "I am guarded by a purer love;" and he smiled at Mary; "but I was, at that moment, thinking of an actress. Do you recollect a girl at Hastings, for whom an affecting apology was made; do you think she was incapable of feeling affection or unworthy of inspiring it?"

Mary cast one single glance at him, to see if there was any concealed meaning in this explanation, and being re-assured on this point, she fixed her eyes on her brother; but Lionel preserved the same perfect command of countenance, the same imperturbable placidity of features, the recollection of which at the theatre had since astonished her. Alas! thought Mary, how shall I ever again learn to look in those eyes and trust their expression? How shall

I ever listen to that voice and believe, undoubtingly, all that it asserts? How shall I decide, when facts are against Lionel, and his words alone are opposed to those facts? The days of confidence are over between us. Never, oh, never! now, beloved brother, can I gaze on your bright countenance, and say, "*I* know his thoughts—from *me* he can have no concealments! A cold mask is on your face, and the workings of your heart lie buried and unconfessed; a barrier has been placed between us, which nothing can ever remove!" And Mary's love for Lionel was no longer the perfect and happy love of other days.

CHAPTER V.

My meditations in their outset wore
The braveries of ignorance; and youth
But cast them.——

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE.

Dreams of a far world, heavenly bright,
And fits of passion's storm;
A changeful thing, half gloom, half light,
Child's heart, and woman's form.

THE MOORISH GIRL.

THE second parliamentary session in which Clavering and Lionel bore a part, had now commenced. Clavering's eldest brother died early in the spring, and letters were dispatched to recal the second son, who, as we have before

stated, was attached to an embassy abroad, and who had not only always been William Clavering's favourite, but returned the partiality with a fervency of feeling which resembled his own. "Henry will forward my advancement as if it were his own," thought the younger brother, as he mused on the strange and unforeseen steps by which he was, as it were, thrust forward in life; *he* will triumph in my triumphs; he will feel interested in Mary, for my sake; he will help me to persuade my father."

Meanwhile, that father daily grew more proud of his son: he regretted that he had not earlier endeavoured to secure his return to Parliament; perhaps injudiciously, for quiet study, time, and reflection, had matured and rendered more vigorous a judgment, whose acuteness in very early days ran some danger of being impaired by the eagerness and enthu-

siasm which still gave a strong bias to Clavering's mind. That enthusiasm, however, was happily moderated. He had seen his own mistakes, and the mistakes of other men, while forced to be merely a quiet spectator of events; the consciousness that had he *then* had the power to realize his favourite theories, he would have had to regret, in many instances, their mischievous tendency or their utter uselessness, made him cautious, now that he was one of those empowered to act and struggle in the cause. There were not wanting, among the set of hot-headed youngsters, with unrazored chins, who had been miraculously elected "as fit and proper persons" to represent a portion of the English people—there were not wanting, I say, many who declared that the confessedly "a fine fellow," Clavering, "wanted rousing;" but older men hailed the token as proof of a sound and vigorous intellect, one

not easily lured on by false hopes, nor easily daunted by apparent difficulties. They complained of no backwardness; they saw no lukewarmness; they knew that the silent and determined heat of the glowing furnace, has more power than the noisy crackling and unequal flame of the burning bough; and Clavering was already named amongst them as one who was fit to hold office when they should come into power.

Among the warmest of Clavering's admirers was his half-uncle, the Marquis of Altonby. Himself a man of sufficient talent to discern the talents of others, (and perhaps to have profited by the share granted him, if he had not been the weakest and most timid of politicians,) he rejoiced in the sort of *reflected* success which his nephew's celebrity appeared to afford. He had always ardently desired office, not for gain, or for power, but as a pledge that his

party "thought something of him." It is to be presumed that his party thought *nothing* of him, since

"From youth to age the reverend 'marquis' grew,"

without ever making a nearer approach to political fame, than what might be gleaned from such newspaper contradictions, as the following:—

"We have authority to state, that the report of the —— being offered to the Marquis of Altonby, is totally unfounded;"—or, "A rumour has been spread, that a certain marquis will be named to succeed a noble lord recently deceased. How such a foolish sentence could have crept even into the very foolish columns of our contemporary, we are unable to guess; but *we* can affirm, &c.;" or (more bitter still), "Nothing is more ridiculous than the flying reports which are circulated during the formation of a new ministry; for one single office, *ten* different noblemen have been named in half

the number of days, each more unlikely than the other, the last on the list being Lord Altonby! Poor dear pottering, wavering, stuttering Lord Altonby! this is indeed a climax of absurdity!"

As he advanced in life, the usual additions to paragraphs like the foregoing were duly made. "Lord Altonby is named to succeed Earl ——. We cannot remember the day when this marquis was not *named* to succeed somebody; but in what, or to whom, has he ever succeeded? In the year 18— he made a speech, and since that memorable oration, (remarkable chiefly for the truly maidenly hesitation with which it was delivered,) all that the political world know of him is, that he has given a number of what are termed political dinners. In stirring times, like the present, we want men who know something more than the difference between hock and champagne; men who have done some-

thing better than pass their lives studying Ude and consulting with a French cook who has his hair curled every morning, and times the stewing of his entremets by striking his gold repeater."

Poor dear Lord Altonby! he wished nothing better than to have higher aims, but the office of *Dinner-giver* was the only office in which his party appeared to think he could be of use to them. As the slow conviction of this melancholy truth forced itself on his unwilling mind, (years after every body else had considered it as a settled thing, that he was never to be more glorious than at the beginning,) he cast his eyes towards Clavering, and bethought him how he could best profit by his nephew's probable celebrity.

Lord Altonby was not one who willingly gave up his point, though it appeared feebly contested; nor was he one of your sulky, dis-

appointed politicians, who wrap themselves up in a thunder-cloud, and roll grumblingly out of the political hemisphere—God knows *where*. No, he was a mild, well-mannered, anxious gentleman; and as Byron's death-blow of hope made his memory immortal, so the death-blow dealt by his ungrateful friends to the marquis's political reputation, only caused his craving for political fame to extend beyond the term of his natural life. He had two daughters, the Lady Louisa and the Lady Clarice Lyle. He had been too busy, at his first outset in life, to think of such an interruption as a regular marriage; but having, in an unoccupied moment, observed what an excellent political connexion a friend's daughter had made, he suddenly took his hat and stick, walked down to the residence of one of the then ministry, proposed for the eldest of the girls, (a fair pretty creature, who was a little astonished, a good deal amused,

and exceedingly flattered,) married her in five weeks from the date of his proposal, and made her the mother of two little girls.

Lady Louisa was eighteen, sickly and nervous; her father considered her a complete cypher. Lady Clarice was sixteen, and the greatest beauty (in a diminutive style) ever seen in London; but our marquis would have married her to Lord Eldon, or begged the Duke of Wellington's acceptance of her, with forty thousand pounds down, rather than not have made "a political connexion."

His transport therefore may be imagined, when it first struck him that instead of a full-blown Tory, he might secure a budding Whig; instead of a stranger, his sister-in-law's son; instead of a tired silk-worm, that had spun its silk, a politician with all the promise of his years to come. He was only deterred from actually proposing to Clavering to marry his

child, by the remembrance of his own many disappointments, and a desire to pause till his nephew's future glory should assume a shape of greater certainty.

Meanwhile he invited him constantly to the house; had the delighted little Lady Clarice taught to ride, that she might always accompany her cousin in his gallop down to the house, and treated him as a dear son; comforting himself with the reflection, that if after all, the beams of glory which seemed to hover round the new hope of the House of Commons turned out "mere moonshine," he could easily refuse his consent, and restore the juvenile and diminutive Lady Clarice to her murmuring governess, who always spoke of her with a pitying shake of the head, as "Cette pauvre et chère petite."

As to Clarice herself, she was enchanted at the arrangements made by her papa, and

never enquired *why* they were made. She was in raptures with her horse, which she amused herself whipping into full speed, and laughing at the alarm of those who accompanied her. She was enchanted with Clavering, at whose feet she used to sit on a low ottoman, telling him of the beauty of his eyebrows, and the eulogiums passed on his speeches.

She was delighted with her opera box, where she occasionally rolled herself up in the red silk curtain, when, as she said, "those ugly men in the pit" *would* stare at her; and she had a violent dispute with her governess on the subject of her right to be thought a woman and treated as such.

Governed, Lady Clarice never had been, even when a child; and entering her teens had not sobered her: she still flung herself on the ground, and sobbed like a child, when mortified by a reproof from those she loved: she

still stamped her tiny foot, shook back her glossy ringlets, and dilated her wild blue eyes when opposed or contradicted: she still cared for *bon-bons*, and went into ecstacies about a ball dress. She never sate prim and *posée* on a chair; she was either on the ground, buried in the ottoman, or crouched in a corner of the sofa. She sang sweetly, accompanying herself on the guitar; and her favourite amusement was dressing as a page, and weaving a romance in her own mind, in which her sick sister was supposed to be a lady whose knight was in Palestine, and whose mournful moments were soothed by hearing from this faithful page an account of all the impossible deeds of bravery in which her lover had distinguished himself.

She had a genius for music, and a turn for rhyming; and when, allowing her wayward fancy to stray through fairy-land, and

expressing herself half in recitative, and half in measured melody, Lady Clarice sat in her page's dress, the white plume of her black velvet bonnet floating on her crimsoned cheek, and her passionate and inspired eyes flashing through the shadow of their long soft lashes, (contrasted too as her eagerness was by the languid attention of Lady Louisa's pale reclining figure,) a more beautiful picture could scarcely be imagined, or one which would, over certain minds, possess more power to fascinate.

But Clavering's was a soberer style of feeling. He preferred muslin petticoats to grey page's dresses; had a great horror of seeing a woman in a passion, let her form or face be ever so fairy-like; particularly disliked Lady Clarice's distinguishing faults, restlessness and vanity, and was provokingly inclined on all occasions to look to the future instead of being dazzled by the present. He continually said

to himself, (little dreaming of Lord Altonby's schemes respecting him,) "Now what in heaven's name would a man do with a creature like that, *for a wife!*"

Once, indeed, the expression of his countenance caught the careless eye of his wayward cousin. She had been trying a difficult step in a Spanish castanet dance, and impatient at her own want of success, she flung down the castanets, exclaiming, "I declare, sister, it would be easier to *fly;*" then, as if to prove her words, she suddenly danced forward, vaulted lightly into a chair at the end of Lady Louisa's sofa, and in a moment stood balanced on the arm of the sofa itself.

"Take care! take care!" burst spontaneously from the lips of Clavering and her sister.

Lightly as a bird from its spray, Lady Clarice Lyle touched the ground, and after

hesitating a moment with an angry pouting expression, she crept towards her usual place on the low cushion by Clavering's chair, and drawing his book gently out of his hand, she said coaxingly, "How angry your voice sounded."

"No, not angry. I was alarmed lest you should fall."

"Yes, you *were* angry: you looked displeased. You often look displeased with me, and yet you will not own it. I would break myself of habits that displeased you, if you took the trouble to tell me of them." And she looked anxiously up in his face.

"I am afraid I should not alter you," said Clavering with a kind smile.

"You would, indeed you would!"

Clavering shook his head, and gently patted her upturned cheek. Lord Altonby who happened to enter the room at that moment, made

his thousand-and-first mistake, in supposing that matters were progressing favourably towards the consummation he desired.

But though William Clavering was proof against the fascinations, and even against the growing shyness and tenderness of Lady Clarice's improving manner, Lionel (who met her in her rides with her father and cousin), was not. He fell passionately in love with her, before he had known her a week; and the intuitive coquetry of the little beauty, soon taught her that not to hear her new friend when Clavering spoke, or to put her horse into a canter when she perceived her cousin coming, was the most bitter offence she could offer.

She did both, therefore, as often as the spirit of mischief prompted her. Not that she really preferred William Clavering; on the contrary, to her vivid fancy and superficial observation, Lionel seemed twice as clever, twice as hand-

some, and above all, twice as *strange;* (for with Clarice to be *odd,* to puzzle her, and give her food for conjecture, was in itself a merit.) She knew not how to value the better qualities of her cousin's nature; his fearless sincerity—his calm and even temper—his indulgence and kind-heartedness;—wayward herself, she loved even the waywardness of Lionel. The capricious changes from gaiety to gloom, from tenderness to anger, from devoted passion to the coldness and tyranny of selfish love—these fed her restless spirit, and charmed her fevered imagination. She was not yet, perhaps, in love with either: but Lionel was the one she thought of; for Lionel she twined her bright hair into fresh ringlets; for Lionel she sang her best songs; and under pretence of his being Clavering's favourite companion, she persuaded Lord Altonby to ask Lionel to the house. He came; not often indeed, for the

marquis having discovered that he was the most impatient listener to his political views, that even *he* had ever met, pronounced him a d—d Tory, and gave him little encouragement to visit there; but still he did come, and Lady Clarice was forced, angrily to allow to her own heart, that struggle as she would, she could not meet him without a blush, nor hear him spoken of in his absence without checking a sigh.

Meanwhile, one of the early attempts to carry through the Catholic Emancipation Bill, created an intense interest in the political world; and for the first time Clavering endeavoured to convert Lionel to his own opinions.

He argued eagerly, most eagerly; he added, that it was by no means a party question, and that Lionel would find many bold and consistent men on his own side, who would vote for the Catholics; but Lionel, embittered more than ever by his new jealousy of the Lady

Clarice, felt a secret pleasure in contradicting and opposing his fancied rival; and when Clavering, (in answer to some sneering argument), repeated in a vexed tone, that it was impossible he could really *think* what he had just *said;* he exclaimed with the angry vehemence of a boy—

"I'll thank you not to treat me as if you considered me a fool, or reply to me as if you thought me a liar."

The ready apology was made, the kind frank hand extended; and the circumstance passed away; but Mary saw, with inexpressible vexation, that every day increased the bitterness of Lionel, and that all conversations between her brother and her lover bordered on a quarrel, let them begin on subjects apparently the most indifferent.

CHAPTER VI.

> Thou art the happy one! Thy race is run;
> For thee there is no future more; for thee,
> No evil-boding hour can knell again.
>
> SCHILLER'S WALLENSTEIN.

MEANWHILE Mrs. Bolton's health rapidly declined; the physicians declared that although she might linger for some months, yet that she might die suddenly at any moment. One evening she called Mary to her, and said in a low feeble tone—

"My dear, I feel you have been very good to me, and I wish to explain what some people may perhaps think ungrateful after I'm gone. I have not left you any thing in my will;—hush! my dear," continued she, as Mary made an eager attempt to speak. "I have left you nothing; I have not divided my fortune into legacies, but I have done what I consider better. I have left the whole of my property, without exception, to William Clavering, that you may both be married now, instead of wasting your youth in expectation. I have not above two thousand a-year to leave, but with that and your own money, you may live very comfortably till William gets on. They tell me his talents are wonderful: I wish you happy with him, my dear;" and Mrs. Bolton feebly pressed the hand of her weeping companion; and sank back silent and exhausted.

One of the whims of the kind-hearted old

lady was, that the young people should all meet again at dinner at her house, as they used to do. She herself invited Lord Alfred Arlington, (who was now a member of Parliament,) and Jack Conolly, in the hope of pleasing Lionel. Clavering's coming was a matter of course, and as she was wheeled into the room in her easy chair, she said solemnly, "It may be the last time we shall ever be altogether, my dears."

The evening passed as usual. Jack Conolly was silent and depressed; Lord Alfred solemn and stupid. Mary, who had heard much of Lady Clarice Lyle's beauty, questioned Clavering about her, and asked whether he had had a pleasant dinner the preceding day at Lord Altonby's.

"Yes," said Clavering, "it was very amusing; Mr. Hartley was there, who is full of anecdotes, and tells them almost as well

as Mr. Conolly," and he slightly bowed as he spoke.

"He is always watching for a moment to introduce a story;" observed Lionel; "all men who tell anecdotes are tiresome, they have such a fretful eagerness to speak, especially if the anecdote is a secret, or a scandalous tale."

"Well." said Lord Alfred, gravely, "*I'm* always glad to repeat any thing; but why *is* one anxious to tell news? why *does* one always long to tell a secret?"

"Probably," remarked Conolly, with an amused smile, "it is a special provision of nature, that treacheries may be discovered; but the fact is, Hartley tells the same stories too frequently; anecdotes are tolerable once, but, like the measles, we should not be liable to them a second time; people should not hark back on their college days; a man should get

well over the fever of story-telling, before he comes to years of discretion."

"It is rather the disease of our second childhood," replied Clavering; "but I confess I think it interesting to hear anecdotes of remarkable men and former times."

"And I, on the contrary," said Lionel, agree with the Eastern king, who never heard the chronicles of former times except when he wished to be lulled to sleep. Besides, I detest Hartley's mode of telling them, he has the petty ambition of shining in society, he talks for the sake of display, and even makes us wait while he sounds his periods."

"It is at least a harmless ambition," said Clavering, "which tries to please, and can only succeed by affording us amusement."

Lionel, who piqued himself on never talking in society, and was proud of the reputation

given in the phrase,—" I assure you, he can be very pleasant when he chooses,"—replied with some contempt, " Ambition in conversation is insufferable, it ought to be excluded from society, it is a detestable vice whether in private, or in public life."

" I believe," said Clavering eagerly, " ambition is an universal passion, and only scorned by those who have no hopes of procuring its gratification. And where should we be without that much abused quality? is it not the love of living honour, or posthumous fame, which has obtained for men every benefit which they enjoy? We owe all our institutions and securities for liberty to the zealous energies of ambitious men."

Lionel's upper lip curled in disdain. " Clavering, men undoubtedly begin with these high-flown notions, but you will find it difficult to

name one instance in which their visionary virtue does not dwindle away into an anxiety for personal elevation."

"One instance: why there are a thousand—what do you say to Washington? what——"

"I'm very tired of hearing about Washington," said Lord Alfred, with a yawn.

"Yes," said Lionel, "and so am I. I feel like the Athenian who was tired of Aristides, because he was always called so just, so just. This ostentation of virtue is a public affront, and he was properly punished."

"Then you would punish a man for possessing any pre-eminent excellence," said Clavering, good humouredly, "this is indeed a zeal for equality, a levelling doctrine, which we hardly expected from you."

"I would punish him for the hypocrisy of feigning such virtue," answered Lionel, "and as to pre-eminent excellence, it has nothing

whatever to do with personal elevation. Your great men would find many of the undistinguished crowd superior to themselves in moral principle, and not inferior in intellect."

"What then," said Clavering, with a smile, "you believe in the village Hampdens and the mute inglorious Miltons? so do not I. It is surely an unfair and oblique mode of disparaging successful men, to pretend that there are a thousand others far superior if opportunity had served them. Great men make opportunities, and if we read their lives, we find that they had an innate consciousness of power, and proportionate energy."

"Innate consciousness of power," said Lionel, sneeringly, "sounds very well when they succeed, but if they fail it is called unsurmountable conceit."

There are three sorts of ambition," suddenly

interrupted the silent Lord Alfred;—"Well, why do you all laugh?"

"No one divides his discourse into three parts, unless it is a sermon or a charade, my dear Lark;" said Conolly; "three is a sacred number from the earliest times, and so is seven."

"Yes," said Lionel, "formerly, when there were only seven planets and seven metals, but now the charm is broken, for their number has been increased."

Clavering laughed; "Don't be discouraged Lord Alfred, there are still seven days in the week, and seven patronesses of Almack's, and seven deadly sins."

Lord Alfred never attended to others when he had made up his mind to speak; he, therefore continued gravely; "At least you must allow that there are two sorts of ambition, man's ambition and woman's ambition."

"Pooh!" said Lionel, scornfully, "what is woman's ambition? A woman wishes her husband to be prime minister, or her lover to be lord chancellor, or her son to be an ambassador; but what has that to do with ambition? women love men—they have no abstract love for their country; they don't understand it, they take different sides and abuse the opposite party with a most fierce and contradictory spirit; for that comes by nature, but they have no patriotism, and about as much idea of *public* ambition as my Neapolitan greyhound;" and Lionel broke a bit of biscuit and dropped it as he spoke into his dog's mouth.

"Take care, Leo," said his sister, smiling, "take care that, like many eager arguers, you do not entangle yourself in your own argument. Whose fault is it, that women have no spirit but that of party—no idea of ambition, but that of arriving at power? You

allow we are only your echoes, that you influence us, that you lead our enthusiasm. Does it not rather prove that patriotism has become a rare virtue among men, and that love of power and greediness for place have superseded more disinterested motives in those of your sex? Look at the women in the old Roman and Spartan days! Had they no patriotism?"

"No," said Lionel, coolly, "they had *not;* they had vanity, and so they have now. They preferred seeing a son brought home on his shield, to hearing that he had not nerve enough to fight an unequal battle. They did, perhaps, cut off their hair in their country's cause, that they might be able to say they had provided bow-strings for the whole army.—No, depend upon it, woman's ambition is only a desire of notoriety, and is even more mischievous in its consequences than the

ambition of men. What ambitious woman ever did any good?"

"Do you not allow," said Mary, "that Madame de Maintenon was an ambitious woman, who yet did good, using her influence in the cause of charity and religion?"

"Madame de Maintenon," eagerly replied Lionel, "did more mischief than even a king's mistress ever did before: and yet, because she was devout, she is always praised. How much happier was France, while the king was living indecorously with Madame de Montespan, and allowing Colbert to preside over the finances of the country, than when, fallen under the influence of that sanctimonious prude, he persecuted and expelled his Protestant subjects, and recalled his general, because he did not attend high mass?"

"You see, Miss Dupré," said Clavering, with a smile, "arguing with a brother never

succeeds with any woman; even when Madame de Maintenon was trying to convince her brother of the sincerity of her faith, and said she wished she was in heaven, he answered, 'vous avez donc parole d'epouser Dieu le père.'"

"And that answer," said Lionel, "shewed that her brother knew her character. She was selfish, and all ambition is selfishness; if it were not, ambitious men would be content to do good without its being known, and not manifest that ludicrous desire for popularity which they all do. Public men and stage-coachmen are never satisfied with the consciousness that they deserve their places, and have driven you safely—they want something for themselves."

"And yet, Leo, you too value popularity," said Mary. "How often in early days have I heard you envy Nelson the enthusiasm he excited, and praise the feelings of the people,

who, when he went to the theatre, rose up simultaneously, to mark their respect."

"I may certainly have praised it as a cheap way of paying an admiral, if he was fool enough to care for the approbation of a mob; but what sensible man would value such homage? Why, the people, as they are called, never know from one moment to another whom or what they really do admire. We know that, in ancient times, the Grecian audience rose up whenever an old man entered the theatre; and yet the same men who paid this tribute of respect to age, applauded the play of Alcestis; in which play, if I recollect right, Admetus, who is condemned to die unless he can find a substitute, begs his respected father to die for him; and, upon the old man's refusal, reproaches him in a most virulent strain of abuse, and at last persuades his more compliant wife, and com-

pels her to perish in his stead. Did these people know what they applauded? If they did, their ceremonious reception of old men was a piece of ostentatious hypocrisy."

"They were inconsistent," said Clavering; "and consistency is, and will ever be, a rare virtue, while men continue to act from so many mixed motives as they do. Singleness of purpose is one of the greatest requisites to make a great man."

"Ay, and that single purpose is their own advancement," said Lionel, coldly.

"We do not grant it—we do not grant it," said Clavering, with some warmth. "Hundreds of men have toiled without the hope or desire of reward, and made the most painful sacrifices for the cause, and the cause only, which they desired to advance; and fluctuating as the approbation of the people may be, these men have had justice done them at last. But

even if it were so—if selfishness did sometimes mingle with their best intentions, if want of judgment perverted, or folly rendered them useless, yet, granting and allowing all this, out of evil cometh good; and I would rather see a thousand mistaken and wrong-headed efforts made, than see one man sit inactive, sneering at the endeavours of the rest of the world."

As he spoke, Clavering's noble brow wore an expression of indignant defiance; he disliked the tone adopted by Lionel—he thought Mary's brother positively disagreeable.

"You are right, William," said Mrs. Bolton, who was half-asleep in her chair.

Lionel reddened and turned pale. "The world would have been happier," said he, in a constrained voice, "if any sneers could have repressed the mischievous ambition of many whom you call great men; but this has been found impossible: and I fancy it will be equally

impossible to repress yours.—Conolly, a glass of wine? You are wonderfully absent to-day."

It was only usual between Clavering and Mary's brother, that the conversation should end in mutual bitterness; but the evening was rendered remarkable by two events. Conolly proposed for Miss Dupré, and was refused with kind and gentle words, (for Mary remembered the injustice her thoughts had done him with respect to Annie Morrison;) and poor old Mrs. Bolton died without a struggle, just as the grey dawn of the early morning ushered in another day.

CHAPTER VII.

But scarce his heart with hope throbb'd high,
Before the wild illusions fly,
  Which fancy had conceived;
Abetted by an anxious eye
  That long'd to be deceived.

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

Then, when I am thy captive, talk of chains,
Proud limitary cherub.

MILTON.

IT was about a fortnight after Mrs. Bolton's decease, that events occurred which altered all the previous intentions of the parties concerned in them. Lionel Dupré had taken a house in Jermyn-street, the furnishing of which he had considerately deemed would occupy Mary's

mind, after the sadness of a death-bed scene. This fixing, as it were, in a home of his own, in the great city of London, caused his thoughts to turn even more eagerly than they had latterly done towards Lady Clarice Lyle. Her rank was higher than he had ever yet contemplated, when dreaming of alliances that would suit him (and we have seen, that to rank and station the merchant's son was any thing but indifferent). Her beauty was unrivalled in its style, and to him the fascination of her wild, wayward, and yet romantic disposition, was magical. He loved, as well as a selfish nature is capable of loving, and Clarice returned his preference; not with the quiet and meek feelings of Mary; not with the devoted and self-sacrificing attachment of lost Annie Morrison; but with the ungoverned fancy of an ill-regulated mind, in which the *passions* supersede the *affections;* and which, with unreasoning fervency,

adores the ideal of its own thoughts in a human form. On the eventful day in question, Lionel had resolved to come to some explanation with his capricious fairy, whose involuntary tenderness, and voluntary cruelty, maddened him; and who, for the first time made him doubt his own power to please.

As he entered the magnificent drawing-room at Altonby House, Lady Clarice rose from her seat by her sister's couch, and put her finger to her lips. Then stealthily coming forwards, with a shy, and yet mischievous expression of countenance, she whispered—"Hush! I have sung poor Lisa completely to sleep. I knew you would come: was not that like a prophetess? I knew it, because you were so cross the last time you parted from me; and I have lullabied Lisa, that she may not hear a word of your apology, for of course you *are* going to make an apology?" Then with a smile,

in which assumed playfulness struggled with real and intense anxiety, Lady Clarice looked up into his face, rested her light trembling fingers on his arm, and murmured, "come into the front drawing-room, and then we shall not wake her."

Lionel obeyed the summons, and found himself, for the first time, *almost* alone with Clarice Lyle. The quiet sleeping figure of Lord Altonby's eldest and least favoured daughter, lying in the shadow of Venetian blinds and muslin curtains, at the further end of the apartment, was all that could be said to break their tête-à-tête.

There was a long pause. Lady Clarice unslung the guitar from her graceful shoulder, and laid it on the sofa; and then taking a rose from her girdle, she amused herself with pulling it to pieces, and allowing the leaves to float one by one to the ground. A small pet

spaniel was lying in a basket close by, and as the last leaf was plucked from the flower, Lady Clarice flung the stem, with its heavy unopened buds, at her sleeping favourite.

"There—I have *woke* him, at all events," said she, laughing to conceal the embarrassment which she really felt at her companion's protracted silence.

And so far the stratagem had a good effect. Lionel started from a reverie of the chances for and against him, should he *now* confess his love for the Lady Clarice, with an angry "Hush!" in which there was more authority than tenderness; but immediately afterwards, with one of those sudden changes of tone and manner which had such an inexpressible charm for the imaginative girl by his side, he poured forth the most vehement, the most romantic, the most poetical assurances of his attachment, (for Lionel, in his most anxious and passionate

moods, never forgot to be *eloquent*,) and besought her to speak one kind word to him, to assure him that his affection was not all poured out on the desert sand.

Lady Clarice listened in mute attention; her breath came quick; her long black lashes quivered restlessly over her downcast eyes; and her cheek burned with a deeper crimson every moment. The breeze that swept through the open casement across the well-filled balcony, brought with it the rich and heavy scent of verbina, geranium, and moss-rose, but its coolness and freshness were unfelt. The perfume of flowers—the words of love—the stillness of the shaded room—the presence of him who had taught her girl's heart its more womanly emotions—from whom, like the fountain-born Undine, she had received a *soul*—all these were much for Clarice Lyle. She did not attempt to answer: she sat, hoping

her inward emotion was not outwardly visible, and doing her utmost to appear careless and composed. Most unsuccessful was that effort!

> The shepherds know
> How hot the noon-day sun shall glow,
> From the mist of the morning sky;
> And so the wily monarch guess'd,
> That this assumed restraint express'd
> More ardent passions in the breast,
> Than ventured to the eye.

Lionel watched the shrinking girl for some minutes in silence, and then, as the triumphant conviction that he was beloved, flashed through his mind, he seized her trembling hand, passed his arm lightly round her waist, and murmured, "Clarice, *my* Clarice!"

"No, no; not yours;" said his companion; and she paused, angry and ashamed at the faltering tones of her own voice. "My father has already decided for me; I have found out"—and she looked round at her sleeping sister—

I have found out that he wishes me to marry my cousin, Mr. Clavering."

Lionel started as if stung. "Lord Altonby wishes it—but you—*you* Clarice—in such a matter, no father should be allowed to compel —to tyrannize."

"Now, how do you know," said his companion, attempting to resume her playful manner; "how do you know that I should require so much compelling? Mr. Clavering is kind and clever, and very handsome; and he comes of a noble family—my father thinks much of that, and of his success in politics."

She was proceeding: when Lionel suddenly flinging her from him, rather than releasing her from his arm, burst into a fit of unrestrained passion. "Look you, Lady Clarice," said he in a choked and smothered voice, "I came here, not to be laughed at—not to hear the views of Lord Altonby, or the perfections

of Mr. Clavering—not to be thwarted, nor to be scorned—not to be insulted by allusions to my inferiority of birth—but to know whether *you*, Clarice Lyle, loved *me*, Lionel Dupré; I will not be trifled with:—unless you have more coquetry in you than any woman breathing, you *do* love me! I have seen it in your eye—I have read it in your cheek—I have heard it in your voice. Assure me of it—lay that bright head on my bosom—and neither father nor lover—marquis nor political adventurer—shall prevent your being mine through life and till death. Mock me with these fooleries of the tongue, and from that hour I turn from you, you lose me! from that hour I never again, voluntarily, cross your threshold, or stand in your presence—so help me God!—Oh! Clarice, speak to me!" added he, after a moment's pause had given him time to recover from the breathless rapidity of those

angry sentences; and again, with a sudden tenderness of tone, he knelt and took her hand.

But that fairy hand was proudly and coldly withdrawn: Lady Clarice Lyle's eyes flashed fire, and the voice of command which sounded in her ear, seemed the voice of a stranger.

"You may go;" said she; "you have taught me this day a lesson I shall not easily forget. Whatever I *may* have felt, you have cured me alike of coquetry and love; Lord Altonby's daughter, sir, though lightly held, is not so lightly won—and if I have rebellion enough in my spirit to brave my father's will, I have also that within me which saves me from being daunted by the threats of a lover. Lose *you!*" continued she, in a yet more irritated and mocking tone, "I had always till now imagined the lady to be the prize. I thank you for your frankness, and bid you

farewell on your own terms." She had spoken with a rapidity and passion which equalled his own, and with the last words she rang the bell with angry vehemence. The summons was immediately answered. "Are Mr. Dupré's horses at the door?" The formal question was mechanically answered: her haughty eye fixed upon Lionel as he slightly bowed—and their interview was over!

But when the sudden gallop of the spurred and startled Arabian, which had so often accompanied the canter of her own favourite steed, in days when Lionel and she were friends, smote on her ear; when the receding tramp was lost in the distant rumbling of carts and carriages, at the top of Grosvenor Place,—and she felt as that sound died away, that she was *indeed* alone: *then* the haughty spirit forsook her; the light faded from her eye—the angry colour left her cheek—and the proud

woman, who had returned taunt for taunt, and banishment for threat, sank to the ground a lovesick and forsaken girl, her weeping head bowed with its dishevelled curls on the cushion of the sofa where *his* arm had leaned, when he murmured those words of passionate affection she was never again to hear. The voice which had pronounced his formal dismissal, now repeated his name with broken and inarticulate sobs, whose vehemence reached and startled into wakefulness the slumbering Lady Louisa.

"For Heaven's sake what is the matter, my lovely Clarice?" said she; "Clarice! come from the next room and tell me what has happened!"

And happy was Clarice (though accustomed to the blessing, she marked it not), that her sorrows might be hushed and her tears wiped away, on the gentle breast of an affectionate sister. The day was yet distant when that

idol of many hearts was to weep unpitied and alone.

Lionel sickened as the familiar face of some indifferent and smiling acquaintance greeted him: he struck spurs to his steed, and rode down to Richmond Park without a groom, that the wild and feverish excitement of his spirit might pass away unwitnessed. There he galloped through the high and branching fern,—under the broad oaks,—startling in his forbidden course the herds of fallow deer—till even the thorough-bred animal he rode, slackened its speed; and then flinging himself off, and fastening the reins of the panting beast to a broken paling, he lay dreaming on the sunshiny turf wild and vengeful dreams, which mocked the quiet and the beauty of the scene around him.

Suddenly he started up. "And to-night's debate!—Shall I leave him to harangue his

pack unopposed? Shall he baffle me even there?—and shall I forget everything because a woman shifts her humour? I who have been loved by——No, *my* hour for bending or for breaking is not yet come!"

He mounted his tired horse, and rode to town. At the door of the Travellers' he found his groom, who was waiting in some alarm for his master's safety.

"I dine here," said Lionel, as he flung the reins into his servant's hand. "Let word be sent to Miss Dupré; and bring round the cab in half an hour."

Lionel could not eat; but he drank, and mused fiercely over the events of the day. Suddenly he heard Clavering's name mentioned in terms of high eulogium, and a comparison instituted between that individual and himself.

The speakers were experienced members of

parliament; and Lionel sullenly listened to what he could not avoid overhearing.

The last sentence spoken, came from a fat elderly gentleman, who seemed particularly averse to Mr. Dupré's style of eloquence. "I'll tell you what," said he, "there's more real eagerness in one sentence of Clavering's than in all the speeches that other fellow has made; and more clear argument. That wine merchant, or beer merchant's son, gives himself monstrous airs for very little: he's all froth and ferment at first, and turns sour afterwards."

"Is my cab ready?" shouted Lionel.

"Yes, sir."

And in ten minutes more he was whirled down to the house, and sat with folded arms, and "gladiator's eye," awaiting his opportunity to speak.

And he *did* speak. The bitter eloquence

of a hating heart, mingled with the eagerness with which he opposed the liberal side of the question. Never had he been so brilliant in his periods; so cutting in his sarcasm. Never had the resounding cheers echoed more loudly through the house; and never had he met Clavering's sorrowfully indignant eye with a glance of such fierce and steady defiance.

A celebrated artist, (since deceased,) remarked of him that night, that the painter who could have so embodied the representation of Satan haranguing his companions in "Paradise Lost," would have built on that single picture an imperishable reputation.

It was beauty; but demoniac beauty: and as he wound up his oration by a false picture of the effects of the admission of catholics, and in his peculiar and exaggerated language affirmed, that like the strong man of Gaza, admitted as harmless to the temple, they would

grasp the pillars of the church, and hurl down ruin on its worshippers, he clutched with his hand at the empty space immediately opposite Clavering, as though he would have strangled him.

At length he sat down, pale and excited, while deafening cheers from his own side resounded through the house.

Clavering rose: he had been pointedly attacked in the speech just concluded, and rebutted the arguments adduced by Lionel with clearness and great command of temper. He alluded to the attempts which had previously been made in favour of catholic emancipation, and commented on the disappointment of the advocates of that cause. "But although," said he, "we have before been beat on this question, and although we may even this night have a majority against us, yet that the day *will* come when this great measure

shall be carried, I feel as confident as if I were endowed with the spirit of prophecy. It may be delayed by circumstances; it may be retarded by opposition. Many of those who stand here this night may not live to see a bill passed which will enable catholics to sit amongst them. But such a bill *will* be carried! In that day we shall forget past disappointments, or remember them only to triumph. In that day we shall forget (and his eye turned suddenly towards Lionel,) the long disheartening evenings, when we heard those whose age would rather have excused even a misplaced enthusiasm, raise their untried voices in their country's senate, to swell the cry of injustice and oppression."

The evening's debate closed; and the bill was lost by one of those small majorities which, while they prove how little was wanting to turn the scale, yet make defeat more galling.

"Well, we're beat," said Clavering, in a vexed tone, as he passed Lionel in the lobby.

"You are;" briefly replied the other; and the flash of hate and triumph which shot from his eye, proved how many feelings were working at his heart, besides that of political opposition.

Clavering felt surprised.

"Are you going home?" said he.

"No, I am going to the Travellers'."

"And I to Lord Altonby's: he was anxious to hear the result of to-night's debate."

They parted with a brief and cold "good night," and each pursued his different way.

It was late, when after losing considerably at whist, Lionel left the Travellers' to return home. The great fatigue of the day he had passed, had not yet out-tired his feverish and excited spirit. The cold grey light of the morning was brightening sufficiently to dim

the fading and sickly moon; and the broad streets and fine buildings of this vast metropolis were unobscured by the smoky atmosphere of the day. The peculiar feeling of the air which in the country is so delicious at this hour, gives even to London a temporary freshness; and as Lionel slowly wandered homewards, he felt almost soothed while it fanned his brow.

When he reached Jermyn Street, and entered his dressing-room, he found to his astonishment that his sister had not yet retired to rest. She was sitting at the writing-table, her head leaning on her hand, and her countenance bearing the trace of excessive weeping.

As soon as he entered, she started up, exclaiming, "Oh, my beloved brother; I thought you never would return."

Lionel kissed her forehead, and seating him-

self by her side, enquired into the cause of her emotion.

"I ought to have told you long since, dear Leo," said Mary, the tears still trembling in her eyes even while she tried to smile: "but I think this letter will explain all, without my endeavouring to put it into words."

Lionel took the note: it was in the handwriting of the hated Clavering. He set his teeth hard, and read as follows.

"*Grosvenor Place*, 1 *o'clock*.

"I write to you in great agony of mind. My brother Henry has been drowned in calm water and fair weather. Everything that could make the accident more startling. His boat upset,—and he is gone—for ever! A better, braver, kinder hearted brother no man ever lost. This will be a great blow to my father; and oh, if I had not the consolation of being

able to turn to you, my beloved Mary, and know that let what will happen, I have one dear tie unsnapped—unbroken, what a wretch I should be!—I had so looked forward to his return! My uncle Altonby broke it to me, and to-morrow I go down to Clavering Hall, with letters for my father. He has but *one* son now!

"Write to me, my own Mary, and believe me now as ever,

"Yours,

"WILLIAM CLAVERING."

"Since when has Mr. Clavering been your lover?"

"He declared himself the day we first went to Moreton Park."

"And why was I not told?"

"I wished to give you time," said Mary, hesitatingly, "to know him—to like him."

"Then now hear me," said Lionel, rising fiercely, "and let me spare the Marquis of Altonby, and Lord Clavering, the trouble of refusing an alliance with the merchant's daughter. I *do* know him, and—*I hate him!*" Leave him to wed his bride, Lady Clarice Lyle,—and from this time forward let his name be never uttered between us."

Mary gazed on her brother in speechless amazement: then suddenly breaking silence, she said, "I do not comprehend you: but this I know, that never will William Clavering give me up for another; no, not even for his grieving father's sake! And for myself,—heart, soul, and existence are his; and no human power shall make me break faith with him!"

"Beware, Mary!" said he: "To-day has half maddened me as it is: add not *your* portion of insult and braving. Tell me not that

my own sister sides against me, and takes part with my bitter foe!"

"Oh, Lionel, be calm," said the weeping girl, as she wound her arms round his neck, "something has occurred to wound—to offend you. It will pass away,—and then"—

"Never!" shouted Lionel, as he flung her off: "the day shall never dawn that sees *this* day forgiven. I hate him—I curse him—I loathe him. So take your choice; be his wife,—and never, except as a stranger, will I look upon your face again—or be my sister, as you promised when you held my dying father's hand in yours. Oh! Mary, Mary!" said he, his tone suddenly changing from that of wild excitement, to low and passionate anguish: "is it come to this? Will you forget our childish days, and break your promise of loving me on to the end, now that others scorn and oppose me? Will you be content to leave

me for ever, and live with one who hates me—whom I hate? I may have loved you with a selfish love, but I *have* loved you, Mary, better than all—ay, better even than *her!* If I have faults, you have restrained them; and surely if you love me the less for those faults, you play the stranger's part: you—*you* should be able to love me in spite of all."

"Lionel," said Mary, solemnly, "you *know* I love you. Put me not to an unreasonable trial; tempt me not to decide between you. I will wait—you shall have time to get over any misunderstanding with William Clavering. You shall explain to me what your wishes are.—I will not brave you,—but I am plighted to *him*, and his wife I must be—if I am ever the wife of human being. A year, brother,—two years—and we will speak again on this subject." And she looked up in his face with an anxious and soothing smile.

But the smile was but as a fitful sunbeam on the stormy and tossing sea. Lionel heard her not. He heard and saw nothing. The offer of delay alone vaguely caught his ear, and he exclaimed, "No, no! No time—no conditions! *I* shall not change, whatever he may do. Love may weaken,—hope may die;—but hate—*hate* grows stronger as it lives! Mary!" and he flung himself at her feet, and bowed his head over her hand: "forsake me not! I have no tie but you:—leave me not to my own mad impulses—to my own frenzied heart. *I* will not marry: *I* will seek no love but *yours*. Promise me—swear to me that you will not be William Clavering's wife; or know me from this night a reckless and a ruined man!"

"Lionel! my own Lionel: you are delirious with some vexation. Look up at me! Look up at me. Look into your sister Mary's face,

who has been all her life as much a mother as a sister to you. Be calm—be comforted."

As she spoke, she fondly and coaxingly raised the head which bowed faintly on her knee; twined her arm round his neck, and stooped to kiss his brow.

But a stiffened expression of horror overspread her features, and she remained motionless. The over excitement of the day had been already too much for Lionel, and the sudden passion caused by the last event had done its work. A vessel had burst in his lungs; and as the bubbling blood tinged his colourless lips, and his eyes closed from exhaustion, Mary thought he was dying.

The dawn of morning, and the glimmering of the lamp on the mantel-piece, spread that pale and sickly hue peculiar to the mingling of real and artificial light, on all surrounding

objects, and made the brow and cheek of her young brother seem ghastly as death itself. Mary assisted him to lie down on the sofa, loosened his neckcloth, and applied the remedies advised by the doctors after the accident at Moreton Park. She walked up and down the room in an agony of fear and sorrow, till the arrival of the physician, who assured her there was no immediate danger; then kneeling by his side, she said, in a voice almost inarticulate, "Forgive me! forgive me, brother! only strive to get well for *my* sake, and I will give up all for yours! I swear it, Leo. I swear to live for you, and you only; I swear to have no tie, but that which bound us together when we were first left orphans. Brother," continued she, so passionately, that it seemed hardly Mary's voice that spoke, "I am *yours*—not William Clavering's; yours only, while our lives last!"

Lionel feebly pressed her hand; and he, who then believed but a few hours to stand between him and death, was soothed by the assurance that his enemy should not triumph.

CHAPTER VIII.

We two have grown
Inseparably together, as two grafts
Out of the selfsame stock; we've shared alike
The sun and shower, and all that Heaven hath sent us;
I've loved him much, and quarrelled with him oft,
And all our loves and quarrels past are links
Which no adversity shall e'er dissever!

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE.

How can I live without thee! how forego
Thy sweet converse, and love so dearly joined?

MILTON.

YOUTH and a strong constitution bore Lionel through. He was advised to winter at Nice, and after that, if his health should be sufficiently restored, he might return to England.

Mary had avoided any expression of change towards her lover in her letters. She could not bear to think that she must add another vexation, and a bitter one, to the sorrow which already oppressed him. She could not believe that Lionel, on reflection, would require such a sacrifice from her. She waited, doubting, fearing, and hoping, till at length a letter from her lover, more definite and explicit than any she had yet received, obliged her at once to seal her fate.

In this letter, Clavering informed her that he was going abroad immediately to arrange his brother's affairs, receive his papers, &c.; that it was his father's desire he should now entirely relinquish the study of the law, and pursue only his political career; and that on his return from the continent, it was his intention to inform Lord Clavering of his

intended marriage, which he hoped would take place in the September of that year.

Was the cup, so full of happiness, to be dashed down ere it was tasted? Clavering's name had never been mentioned between Mary and her brother since that fearful evening. To write him a refusal, without once more trying the mood and temper of Lionel's mind, was more than Mary's strength of purpose could bear; and yet to discuss with the invalid a topic which was likely to be productive of such intense agitation, was almost impossible.

With a heavy heart, and a sad, though composed countenance, she continued silently to pursue her usual occupations, and to work or read in the room with her brother. Yet Clavering's letter *must* be answered; and as she repeated this to herself, with a feeling of agonized anxiety, she ceased to work, and

allowed her clasped hands to drop on her knee.

Lionel saw the desponding attitude, and the fair quiet profile which gazed so sadly into vacancy. He called her to him.

"You have heard from Clavering," said he: and the momentary hope which rose in Mary's heart, was crushed by the succeeding sentence. "You do not *repent* having given him up for me? Die or live, as I may, my own sister, I shall always remember that I owe you the quiet and comfort of these hours, in which I can lie reflecting that *you* are not to be taken from me! We two stand alone in the world, and we will live for each other."

Mary returned the offered embrace, and it was in a clear, cheerful tone that she said, "you will not explain to me, now that *all is over,* what was the cause of quarrel between you—and—Mr. Clavering?"

"We had no quarrel," said Lionel: "*that* day contained little more in it than other days, to make me ——"

The bitter word and the darkening scowl were arrested by Mary's gentle hand.

"You shall not say a word more," said she, with a forced smile; "you will tire yourself, and I shall only prove a needless curiosity. It is all arranged; and the why and the wherefore signify little. I am now going to be more agreeable, and sing you some stray words, *married* to my music. Listen! shut your eyes, and instead of your pale sister imagine a bright gipsey girl, with glistening eyes, white teeth, and a smooth brown skin."

A merry prelude rang from the harp, which stood in Lionel's room ever since the beginning of his illness, and the words, which had little in them, received a charm from the sweet spirited manner in which they were sung.

Ask me not to leave my heath!
  Bleak although it seems to thee,
There thy gipsey girl drew breath,
  There my mother cradled me;
There the wild-gorse giveth out
  Richer scent than garden flowers,
Free to rove we roam about,
  And laugh away the sunny hours!
    A better lot,
      (As thou think'st thine)—
    Tempts me not,
      Oh! lover mine!
Thy whole year's dream of splendour could not pay
For the bright glory of one summer's day!

Ask me not to quit the wood,
  Where the broad oak's branches green,
Scarcely let a breeze intrude,
  Or a sunbeam peep between.
There the murmuring ring dove's song,
  Lulls my heart with pleasant dreams;
And the brooklet glides along,
  Broken into silver streams.

Rather *thou*
Come dwell with me,
'Neath the bough
Of some old tree;
And leave the town, whose spires, and buildings gay,
Shut out the glory of God's summer day!

As Mary concluded the rich and swelling cadence of her song, she looked round to her brother's couch. He had fallen asleep, and she was free to steal away and weep over blighted prospects, and trials to come. As she rose from the harp, involuntarily, and almost mechanically, her practised hand swept faintly along its chords, the melody of a touching and well-known song, one of the early offspring of the unequalled genius of Moore, one which she had heard the poet himself sing, while under the roof of her grand-aunt, and which was engraved on her memory, with all the eager mournfulness of tone which belongs to his singing. The unspoken line rose to her

lips and died away again, as she turned from the harp; and surely at that moment she resembled the poet's creation, of whom no one guessed—

"That the heart of the minstrel was breaking!"

As she turned, the clock struck the hour of the day. It was the same clock which Mary had besought old Joe Morrison to buy in at the sale of her father's effects; and it startled her; it seemed as if that father again repeated those impressive words:—"Promise me never to forsake him; to prefer him to all other ties if they should be incompatible with the love and protection I depend on your showing him; —you may save him from heavy sins, from glaring imprudence; and if, in the unseen future, circumstances should tempt you to falter in the duty you have taken upon yourself, think that a dying father's voice cheers you

on, and tells you that you stand in a parent's place."

"Yes!" said Mary, as she gazed for a few seconds on Lionel's slumbering countenance, "I *will* fulfil my promise. Let what will be my own fate, I will watch over yours; I swore it in an hour of darkness and sorrow to my earthly parent, and may the God and Father of all, give me strength to keep my vow, and wisdom to direct my thoughts!" She glided softly from the room, and meekly bending over the desk, at which she had so often read to her father or written for him, she wrote as connectedly as she could to her lover, to inform him of the change in her intentions; and to request him to make no struggle to claim her as she never could be his.

Clavering sent no answer to the letter which Mary at length dispatched; and even this was bitter to her. "He parts from me with less

struggle than I imagined," thought she, as she sate weeping alone, after the first few days had passed away; and though, in her letter, she had particularly endeavoured to make her rejection of him clear and decisive (in spite of the kind and gentle words in which that determination was clothed); yet now, with the inconsistency natural to the human heart, she wondered he should submit to that rejection without appeal.

She was startled from these reflections by a knock at her chamber-door. "Come in, Swinden," said she, as she hastily wiped away her tears.

Swinden entered—"Mr. Clavering, ma'am, wishes to speak to you in the drawing-room."

"Say I will come down to him directly," said Mary, with forced calmness; and she was left alone!

Amidst all the tumultuous feelings which agitated her at this moment, joy was pre-

dominant. Joy, that, let what would happen, she should once more familiarly see and converse with him; joy that, let what would be her future fate, he had come once more to expostulate, to claim her.

When she entered the room, Clavering was standing leaning against the chimney-piece, dressed in the deepest mourning; and she positively started at the paleness of his countenance.

He came forward and greeted her kindly, and then in a low subdued voice, he said, "I have known you so long and so well, that I feel assured caprice is impossible to your nature; least of all towards *me*. If I had deemed otherwise, I should not be here. I am come to ask you why, after permitting me to hope so long, you have suddenly destroyed that hope, just as circumstances (some very melancholy, but all favourable to *us*), have made our imme-

diate union possible, after anxious years of expectation? While poverty was a bar between us, and I was a cypher in the world, you loved me, Mary! I rose—I became a marked man—and I was proud of the fame that made me more worthy of *you*. Your good old aunt died, and left me an income sufficient for us both. I had learned the value of wealth, and I triumphed in its possession. My eldest brother died, and while I grieved for him, I yet rejoiced in the return of the one who loved me, for he, I thought, would love *you*. *He*, too, perished," continued Clavering, the tears rushing to his eyes, "perished in the pride and prime of manhood; and even then (may Heaven forgive the selfishness of the thought), even *then*, after the first shock was over, I thought of *you*. I thought of the certain future which was to make you mine! What then has happened to break my dream? why,

oh! why, Mary, after so much apparent gain—am I to lose my heart's best hope?"

She had continued silently to weep by his side, ever since the first allusion to the early days of their love. What answer could she make? what reason could she give? She could not tell him that the enduring hatred of her brother, forbid all thought of union between them; she could not say that an oath had passed her lips, never to be his wife, at the wild entreaty of a selfish impetuous boy. But as she thought it all over, and imaged to herself their near separation—a separation without term or limit—she bowed her head on his shoulder and wept *there.*

Again he questioned her, while he pressed her fondly and sadly to his heart; and at length in a faltering voice she replied, "Circumstances have occurred since I last saw you:" and there she stopped.

"Circumstances, my Mary! what circumstances? is it possible that you allude only to your brother's illness, and your fear of leaving him? Oh, God! if it were only that! *Can* you think that at such a moment, I would separate you from *him?* No, Mary, *our* home shall be his home, as long as he will permit us to keep him: till he recovers—till some pretty substitute takes your place and mine, to watch over him.—Was that your thought, Mary?"

"Oh! Clavering, do not break my heart! No—no—it is not that—you are too good—too noble. I never feared—I never thought—but *our* home! oh! *that* is impossible!"

Clavering paused. "Is it any thing respecting my father, Mary? Has any idiot persuaded you that proud as he is, he would not welcome you as a blessing to his hearth? if so, they have wronged him, Mary; I, who

never deceived you, tell you so." He paused again, and added, "Is there to be no explanation between us?—are you to reject me, and not even tell me why?

"I cannot, Clavering—you would not understand—in short it is impossible. This only believe, that I have loved you—that I *do* love you with the fondest and firmest affection that ever woman felt: that the tones of your voice have haunted me like a pleasant dream: that the hope of being your's, has made all other things indifferent to me. I have repeated your name in solitude till I have smiled at my own folly: I have bent when reading, and pressed my lips to the printed lines which *you* had quoted: I have thought it happiness only to walk in the same path where you had walked—to look on the same objects that you had looked upon. And yet we must part! we must part, and God grant that whoever you may hereafter

choose to fill my place, may love you as *I* have loved!"

"No, Mary!" said Clavering, passionately; "I gave you no boy's affection, which can fade, or change, or turn to another object. I loved *before* I met you, (if such passing fancies deserve the name,) but my heart has now loved its last. Your image will go with me to the grave!"

There was a pause: Mary pressed the hand she held, and rose, as if to bid farewell. Clavering detained her.

"Have patience with me but a moment," said he. Whatever may be your reason for this wild, this unexpected resolution, it cannot surely endure for ever. Set me a term of hope, say you will be mine ten,—ay, even twenty years hence,—and I shall not depart utterly comfortless!"

M ary hesitated, she trembled—it was strong,

the temptation to leave him bound, and wait the change that might take place in her brother's sentiments; but she resisted it as selfish. Why should she allow him to waste his life in what after all, might be a vain expectation? Why should she wreck his happiness, on a chance, a frail and improbable chance, of securing her own? No! she would free him from all pledge, and leave the future to that God on whom she depended for strength to do her duty.

And in a few brief, but explicit words, Mary refused the last request, destroyed the remaining hope, of him whom she had loved so fervently; to whom, in spite of her natural and acquired reserve, she had so passionately protested that love; she refused him, and faltered out the earnest "God bless you!" which he knew was to be answered by his own farewell.

The door at this moment opened, and the

servant informed Miss Dupré that her brother had inquired for her twice, and was impatient to see her. A hurried word—a sentence which she scarcely heard—a look she never might forget—and Mary and William Clavering parted, never to meet familiarly again, with youth and hope before them.

CHAPTER IX.

Patience waits the destined day.

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

A DAY or two before he left England, Lionel Dupré received by the twopenny post a fair and feminine-looking billet, which, perceiving to be signed with initials, and written in a cramped woman's hand, he flung down with a sneer of contempt and disgust. But immedi-

ately afterwards, it struck him that he had seen the same handwriting before, and though he could not recollect where, it came back to him as a pleasant remembrance. He picked up the crushed note, smoothed its pages, and read the following lines:—

"I am so deeply grieved at hearing of your illness, and thinking of the last day I saw you, that I cannot help writing to say so. *Try* not to think me forward, for indeed I only write because it may be a comfort to you to know that I have heart enough to be very, *very* sorry, in spite of the harsh words we said to each other. Take care of your health, and remember me, is the prayer of

"C. L."

"Yes, Clarice, you can write to me now—you can pity me now;" thought Lionel, with some bitterness; "and if I die, you will recollect me as the man who made the first confession of

love you ever heard; who first made you conscious of the power of your own pernicious beauty; and you will speak of me to some later lover as 'Lionel Dupré, poor fellow!' But the dream is over, the charm is broken. I have forsworn you, Lady Clarice Lyle! I care not even to receive this token of your regret (and he crushed the note again, and flung it from him). I no longer sigh for your love—the strength which fed my passion is gone, and your pity is wasted on a dying man, who heeds it not."

In such a mood did Lionel depart, and in such a mood, combining as it did, weakness, irritation, and despondency, it is not to be supposed that he could be otherwise than a most irksome travelling companion. Unwilling too, as he was, to allow his mind to brood over its real or imaginary grievances, he was continually occupying himself with trivial anxie-

ties, which for the time assumed an intense importance. Restless and wretched, he fidgetted about all the little events and minor details of their journey, till Mary sighed for one sad and quiet hour, wherein she might indulge in memories of the past, or contemplation of the future, without interruption.

He spent the first two stages of every day's journey in counting over again the bills which had already been paid, and consulting different estimates of the different rates of currency in the countries they were to pass through; and this he did not the least from economy, or a desire to save money. He was, and always had been, not only extravagant himself, but also (as long as it gave him no trouble, interfered with no favourite pursuit, and produced no present inconvenience,) willing to be liberal to others. But he studied the currency, and wondered over each succeeding bill, because he

thus secured to himself something to fret, and to fuss, and to fidget about; he was always looking for a lost book, or a mislaid paper-knife, or an undiscoverable travelling cap; always wondering whether the road they were going was really and actually the best road to the place of their destination, and calculating what hour they should arrive there; always abusing the last hotel-keeper, and swearing against the bore of a long journey. No view, however beautiful, extorted from him an expression of pleasure; no evening, however calm or bright, ever soothed his feverish spirit into contemplation. He cared not for scenery; the purple mountains fading into the sky beyond,—the stretching shore with its high cliffs, smooth sands, and rolling sea;—the waving woods, with their thousand mingling and harmonious tints;—the broad pasture land and golden corn-fields;—the slanting hill-side vine-

yards, and the white villages which dotted the distant plain;—the winding and majestic river, or the leaping water-fall,—were all to him alike indifferent; his soul was cast in too *material* a mould.

Anger, and love, and hate—all human passions, found in his heart a wild and ready echo; and to "the pleasure of sweet sounds," the voluptuous enjoyment of music, his fancy yielded a ready obedience; but to the more refined and spiritualized enjoyments of our nature, he was insensible; and as he roused Mary by some peevish exclamation at her silence, she wondered that the still sunshine, which rested in such glowing repose on the country they were traversing, had not also lulled *his* vexed spirit to temporary quiet.

It was remarkable too, that the very occasion when Mary was making the greatest sacrifice for his sake, was that on which he treated

her with the least apparent kindness and affection. Violent, wayward, and selfish, she had known him from his boyhood, with unequal fits of capricious tenderness between; but harsh, as yet, he had never been to *her;* and she shrank from the wounding speech or undeserved reproach, with sorrowful surprise. She did her best to entertain him, but there *are* moments when utter depression so destroys the elasticity of our minds, that the effort we are most willing to make, becomes impossible. Quiet and self-possessed as Mary was, and anxious to *seem* cheerful and composed, there were times when the sense of his words was lost to her ear; when she turned with a vacant and unmeaning smile, to ask a repetition of the phrase, and her choked heart prisoned back its tears, in an agony of unendurable regret.

It was after a long pause, during which the weary dragging of the carriage up a steep hill,

with its grating, disagreeable sound, had prevented any attempt at conversation, that Mary made some eager and fanciful remark on the burst of beautiful landscape which the hill's summit afforded.

"Psha!" said her brother, peevishly, "what nonsense you do talk, Mary; I declare you are growing quite affected."

Mary Dupré's thoughts wandered back to England. She remembered the description William Clavering had once given of the Highlands, when talking of their *future*. Lord Clavering had a beautiful place in Scotland, close to one of the northern lakes, and she recollected her lover's expression—"I feel, Mary, when I first see that lake, after the heat, and the noise, and the dust of London, as if my soul were suddenly spreading her wings." *Was* this nonsense? and if it were, *they* understood one another.

On descending the other side of the hill, they perceived a travelling carriage advancing in the opposite direction; no sooner had they met, than both stopped; and a dispute arose between the postillions and the couriers, whether they should or should not be permitted to change horses; a favourite arrangement on the foreign roads, and one which, to the habits of English travellers, is particularly disagreeable.

Lionel was reading, and with dogged discontent grumbled at the interruption, but refused to interfere; the postillions insisted that no one would be found to drive the next stage, in the town they were coming to, unless these particular horses were allowed to return; and in the midst of the altercation, a gentleman in the other vehicle, who, like Lionel, had been occupied with a book, suddenly called out in a low decided tone, "Silence! coquins;

faites ce que vous voudrez, mais ne faites pas de bruit."

The accent was English, and Mary looked towards the speaker. He was a fine frank looking young man, and by his side, leaning back in a deep and heavy sleep—was William Clavering!

Mary repressed the exclamation which rose to her lips; she saw not the stranger's gaze bent earnestly, and admiringly on her face; she only saw that pale and noble countenance; the thick dark lashes which hid from her those glorious eyes; and the compressed and grieved expression of the mouth, which for *her* had ever worn a smile. He slept! she who had feared to lift her conscious eyes to his, might gaze on him unchid, unquestioned. He slept, and dreamed not who was watching him!

The strange mixture of awe and idolatry which fills our breasts while gazing on the

sleeping countenance of one we love, stole over Mary's mind; that unexplained and o'er-mastering feeling, which prompts us to exclaim, "Thou art mine, hushed soul! In thy mysterious rest, in thy forgetfulness of outward things—in thy unconsciousness of the nearness of the beating and adoring heart beside thee—in thy blindness to the presence of the watching eyes above thee—in the helplessness of thine hour of suspended existence, when thou art nothing to the busy world, and the world is nothing to thee—then art thou *mine!* Thy first startled glance is mine, thy first smile, the first ray of consciousness which shoots like the morning dawn over thy tranquil brow—these are all mine. I have earned them by the love-watch I have kept, whilst *thou* wert lost to the memory of human passion!"

And ere Mary had remembered how little it was hers to watch Clavering in sleep—to

nurse him in illness—or to soothe him in sorrow (and his countenance bore traces alike of grief and indisposition), e'er she had recalled her wandering senses from their intoxicating dream of love—the jaded and rope-harnessed horses were already half-a-mile on their way.

There was nothing in fact extraordinary in their meeting, for she knew William Clavering was going abroad, and that by this time, he was, probably, on his way home, after having arranged his lost brother's affairs. Nor was there anything extraordinary in a tired and dispirited man sleeping heavily through the bustle of changing horses; but on Mary's mind the interview fell with a sick and sad omen. That he should be utterly unconscious of her presence, while *she* was giddy with contending emotions, smote her to the heart! and seemed a prophecy how little, henceforward, he would share in her fate or her feelings.

CHAPTER X.

Through the long day—the irksome day —
My heart impatient burns;
Still, as the slow hours glide away,
Thy voice—thy smile—returns!
I murmur when the morning light
Breaks in upon mine eye,—
Give me the dark and shadowy night,
And, dreaming, let me die!

The well-remembered voice of Clavering, roused Mary from her reverie. "Mary," it said, "why should this fruitless struggle be made? why should I live lonely and far from you, who love you better than all earth's other blessings? why should you spend your wasted

youth in devotion to one who wounds you with harsh words, and forgets all you have done for him? Leave him, Mary, leave all, and come with me! We will dwell together by the Rhine side, and every day shall pass in sunshine and soft words. There shall be no struggling, no regret, no tears. What? did you think I had in very deed and truth parted from you for ever? For ever! without one word, one sigh; without even the lock of your glossy hair which you promised me long ago? No, Mary, I left you, but only for a time, to feel what it would be, really to part for ever! You *have* felt it; you have believed that you had looked your last on the face familiar for years; you have believed that you should see me no more; and now, confess, oh! confess, my Mary, that your heart was too much mine to bear such parting;—confess, that it would have broken, if all indeed had ended then; confess

that you would brave all—bear all—rather than see me depart alone. Come! Mary, your brother sleeps, and dreams not of you—*I* wake, and watch, and hope—Come! and let us live happy together!"

She has followed him, and they glide together over the rapid Rhine, which lies half asleep in the sunshine, like a merry child rocked to an enforced slumber. The noonday sun is hot, but Clavering is there! He shields her from the intolerable brightness of its beams, and places her where the white sail freshens in the breeze; where her undazzled eyes may turn to him and thank him.

Daylight declines, and evening comes slowly on. The crumbling towers of the old castle stand in their lonely beauty on the purple hill; while through the narrow window of the single and ruined arch, the golden light of the mellow sunset comes slanting to the earth. Fire

hath blackened, decay hath eaten, and man's fury hath defaced that tower; but the sunset calmly shines on, as it shone when armed men manned the castle battlements, and mocked the enemy below.

Night's curtain falls, and evening steals away, while yet they glide over the blue river! The stars come out one by one, as the faint rose-colour of the dying sunset fades along the west. The last and faintest tint is gone, and the proud pale moon looks down upon the bosom of the forsaken waters. Mary and Clavering speak no more: the very beating of their hearts seems hushed by the quiet of that clear soft sky. Hand-in-hand they sit, gazing upwards with earnest glances at the motionless stars, and the rippling of waters beneath their bark is the only sound.

Lo! how the new morning comes, and chases the gloom of night! The cold mists

hang upon the river: the mountain tops are hid; and the dawning sun feebly pierces from time to time the veil which covers the earth. With slow and gradual rise that mist departs, and the giant hills look up, awaiting the glory of the full and perfect day. How chill and dewy feels the morning! But Clavering is there! Closer he folds the furred mantle round her: he holds her with his circling arm: her head leans lightly on his shoulder—cold cannot reach her now!

The bark glides on, cleaving the white mist with its glistening prow. Look, where the broad uprisen sun bursts forth! Tower and crag are visible again. The vapour rolls away—is gone,—and as the glow of sunshine passes over the face of nature, so to the cheek and heart of Mary and Clavering, comes the thrilling and bounding consciousness of eager life. They rouse themselves, and gaze into

each other's eyes:—earth is beautiful, heaven is beautiful;—but oh! the combined beauty of earth and heaven in their loveliest hours is nothing to the smile that ushers in the morning on the face of one beloved! "Welcome," it seems to say, "welcome to the renewal of life and love! Welcome to the light that dawns upon both! Welcome to the day which it is *ours* to spend together!" —Such welcome is not for all,—is not for many:—but for those who *can* receive and give it,—blessed are they!

The bark glides on: they pass the scattered villages and towns, with their grey spires and high narrow houses, glancing to the sun: and as they round that projecting rock, a scene of so much beauty bursts upon their eyes, that with one heart they wish to pause, and dwell there for ever.

The mountain rises almost perpendicularly

from the waters, where its shadow falls, like the purple mantle of a throned king. Beneath, the quiet village peeps from between the hills; and far, far above, on the proud summit, stands the ruined castle of some forgotten chief. The green vines climb up the steep sides, and leave that summit bare in the golden sunshine; and here and there by the water's edge, a little boat lies moored.

All is still and majestic; and the merry voices of the peasant children who come laughing down to the shore, alone break the calm repose of nature.

"Here let us dwell!" said Clavering.

And Mary's voice answered like a sweet echo of his own, "Here let us dwell."

Their bark lies anchored on the quiet bosom of the Rhine. Its white sails are furled, and its scarlet flag flutters idly in the breeze, while they roam together among the hills of Ger-

many. They are at the mountain's foot; and they read together old legends, wild poetry, and the yet more valued histories of empires overthrown, countries differently divided, heroes who have left no name to hallow the spot where they bled, and kings whose lives were a long romance.

They are in the peopled villages, and talk to the peasants in a foreign tongue of the simple joys and sorrows which alone they can comprehend.

The sun-burnt cheek of the young mother glows as they admire the laughing child at her feet: her dark eyes turn to the vineyard where her husband is toiling: she is impatient for his return, that he too may hear the voice of the stranger praising his son. And *they* forget the destinies of nations; the wild ambition, the barren successes, the bloody wars, of which they have been reading, as they listen

to that peasant's words, and watch the eagerness of her loving eyes.

They are on the mountain's brow, and look down many a mile of the river's winding course: many a village and town, many a smiling valley, and many a blue hill that mocks their cheated eyes as it mingles in the distance with the clouds around its head, lies spread before their sight. They wander among the crumbling stones of that nameless ruin, and people its walls with beings created by their own fancy, or glean, from meagre tradition, a tale of mystery and tears. And the setting sun falls full upon Clavering's enthusiastic countenance, as he turns with a kindly smile to relate some wild romantic legend. He speaks, pointing to the lovely sky ——

—That was a blessed dream!

Mary was awoke by the voice of her bro-

ther, who wanted to make some memorandum in his pocket-book, and had lost his pencil.

"I will lend you mine," said Mary, sadly; "and we can look for it when the carriage stops at the inn."

"Nonsense; you know I can't write with those tiresome leaden things: they break every moment—I want my own; it is a patent one, and the only one it suits me to write with. You are so provokingly forgetful as to where you put my things."

"Here it is," said Mary, as she suddenly perceived it glittering in the folds of his traveller's cloak; and the effort to speak brought the tears to her eyes, and the choking sob to her throat.

"What peevish creatures women are," muttered Lionel Dupré, as he threw himself back in the carriage.

And Mary, as she also leaned back, and turned her tearful eyes away, clasped her hands and thought, "It was a dream!—and we *are* parted—parted for ever!"

CHAPTER XI.

I listen'd to thy careless tones
  With a deep and fond despair,—
As though the voice which answer'd thine
  Had left its echo there;
I look'd into thine eager eyes
  With a sad and swelling heart,—
Because dark eyes had gazed on thine
  Ere *we* were doom'd to part;
Forgive me for thine own mistake,—
Alas! 't was for *another's* sake!

THE first person Lionel saw in his first attempt to walk down the esplanade at Nice, was Lady Clarice Lyle.

The health of Lady Louisa was the real and ostensible cause for their coming abroad; but doubtless Lord Altonby had his own reasons

for fixing their departure from England at the same time as Clavering's, and proposing to that gentleman to accompany his cousins as far as suited their different destinations, "in order that he might feel less lonely, and be better able to keep up his spirits."

It was with a cold and haughty bow that Lionel passed Lady Clarice the first day; and being, as we have already mentioned, no favourite with the marquis, he was not pressed to converse. But when, day after day, he saw her surrounded by idle Englishmen and moustachioed foreigners, the star and the goddess of the place;—when he saw those eyes, so childishly bright when he first knew her, steal furtively and sadly up at him as he passed, and drop again as she listened with languid impatience to the compliments of her admirers;—when he remarked the coldness of Lord Altonby, and the surprise of the more favoured

guests at the marquis's table, that the pale handsome young Englishman was not more welcome to his countryman,—then the mixture of vanity and passion, of jealousy and tenderness, woke in Lionel's heart.

"She loves me still," thought he. "It is in my power to remove her from that swarm of whispering coxcombs; to brave that insolent old fool; to baffle the absent schemer Clavering; to prove to the sneering idieots who surround her, that I *can* be what I *will*."

He altered his mode of proceeding; introduced his sister Mary to Lord Altonby; walked and rode by Clarice's side, and their love-quarrel was only remembered with a smile.

Still, in spite of the companionship of Mary, whose interest in Clavering's pursuits had made her quite capable of listening to, and understanding, the disappointed politician's discourse,

the Marquis of Altonby could not bring himself to be fond of the cold and sarcastic Lionel; and the latter, impatient at an aversion which disturbed his continual enjoyment of the society of Clarice, took measures with that young lady by which he could see her uninterrupted and alone.

Young, romantic, and desperately in love, Clarice, who had seldom consulted any guide but her own inclinations, was easily persuaded to meet Lionel, while she was supposed to be visiting at the house of a mutual friend, Lady Dorrington, or inventing new songs to her guitar in her own apartment. The governess was infinitely more occupied with a young German baron, (who actually wished to marry her!) than with her unmanageable charge; and found it more convenient to wink at the constant attendance of Mr. Lionel Du-

pré, than to be taunted by her spoilt pupil with the attentions of her own young lover.

Meanwhile Mary was not without *her* share of conquest in this new field. She was a great acquisition (as a very agreeable Englishwoman must be,) in a town like Nice, to the idle or invalided of her own country; and though the foreigners at first voted her *un peu froide,* and stood rather in awe of her, yet a very short acquaintance removed the prejudice.

The Greek purity of her features, and the repose and gentle cordiality of her manner, rose in a successful though unintentional rivalry with the dark espiégle eyes and vivacious manners of the French and Italian ladies; her style of singing, her way of speaking, were pronounced peculiar and charming; and the women, satisfied that she did not *wish* to outshine them, cheerfully allowed her beauty and

her talents. In fact, they thought it did not signify a straw whether she was handsome and accomplished or no, seeing that she certainly did not intend to make use of these advantages. She was universally popular; and with no one more than with Lady Louisa Lyle, and the old Lady Dorrington whom we have already mentioned as the supposed cause of Clarice's stolen hours of absence.

Lionel was proud and pleased at his sister's success. He remarked it to her, and added that he had always felt sure if she had been known, instead of living the strange retired life she had done in London, she would have even *there* been noticed as superior to the generality of her sex.

Alas! to Mary, notice or admiration were alike indifferent; and while her name became gradually a familiar word, and it was thought odd and *baróque* not to be acquainted with the

charming and accomplished Miss Dupré; while it grew to be a fashion to crowd round her harp, and her presence was promised by the hostess of a fête, as security for a pleasant evening; *she* sighed for the days when taken as a favour from the Bigleys, to be Mrs. Bolton's humble companion, William Clavering walked from his chambers in the Temple, through the dark crowded Strand, to spend an hour by her side.

But of Mary's feelings on the subject no one thought, not even Lionel; or if he did, it was with the conviction that new amusements, new people, a new place, and new indulgences, would soon put "all that d—d nonsense" out of her head. On him, at least, the sun of prosperity shone. A moderately rich young Englishman in our rich and commercial England, is a man of immense wealth abroad; and as Lionel paid readily, and was profuse in his

style of living, he passed as the possessor of boundless riches. His extraordinary beauty too, had a due influence with the fairer sex, and many a passionate burst of tears from the vehement and jealous Lady Clarice, many a fond reproach and earnest prayer, were the disagreeable result of the very agreeable glances which followed him wherever he went, from the dark eyes of the easily-enamoured inhabitants of Nice.

Amongst the many new acquaintances made by Mary, was one which particularly interested her; Frederick Atkins; the identical gentleman who was reading by Clavering's side, the day they changed horses with the English berline. He was a pleasing, frank, high-spirited creature, and contrived to be a favourite even with Lionel, who piqued himself on not forming friendships with *nobodies*, and who could not, by dint of the strictest inquiries, discover more

about him, than that he was somebody's natural son; had been to college with William Clavering: and was attaché at the same court with his brother Henry, at the time the latter died.

Mary liked him. She was not indeed at first aware, that he was the individual who had accompanied Clavering on his journey, for her gaze had never wandered from the slumbering countenance of her lost lover; but she thought him pleasant. He belonged to the same *school* as William Clavering, had read the same books, admired the same passages, held the same opinions; and, with an inferior understanding and less resolute disposition, had yet something of Clavering's nature about him. He was a welcome visitor, and a favourite companion, and it was not till some time after their acquaintance had ripened into intimacy, that she became aware they had previously met.

They had been discoursing of the plagiarisms of which Milton is accused by the compilers of his poems, and a chance word, (one of those knells which ring up so many thousand associations,) brought back to Mary's mind some observations of William Clavering's, the day they had read the Comus together. That day returned with its visionary happiness; she heard his voice—she saw his smile—she remembered the compliment which had made her heart beat so hurriedly, and her eye quail so suddenly. Thought, with its lightning speed, went through succeeding scenes of mingled trial and joy,—till at the last and bitterest—their parting hour—Mary became lost in a mournful reverie.

"I know—I recollect now where I first saw you," said Frederick Atkins suddenly; "I always declared I *had* seen you, and as I have not been in England for years, my friends told

me it was impossible. You were in a carriage which changed horses with another, on the road from —— to ——?"

"Yes," said Mary.

"Ah!" said her companion, as he fixed his eyes on her sad and quiet countenance, "I thought then, that let me meet you when and where I would, I should immediately recognize you; but you have baffled me till this moment, your expression is in general so cheerful, so composed. You have no idea what a melancholy earnestness there was in your face that day; and so much more colour in your cheek. I do not think you even *saw* us, you were in such a deep study. Do you remember the circumstance?"

The sudden question startled Mary out of her habitual reserve and composure. Her eye grew moist with tears, a hectic crimson flushed her cheek, and as she looked up at Frederick

Atkins, her lips parted with a quivering and painful smile. The "*si je m'en souviens!*" of Clotelde de Surville, had not more poetry in it than that single glance. It was but for a moment; the excited expression faded from her face, and left her pale, quiet, and composed as ever; but from that hour a change, slight perhaps and involuntary, but perceptible to her new friend, crept into Mary's manner. Her eye brightened when Frederick Atkins appeared; the causeless colour came and went in her cheek, at some unmeaning phrase or casual observation dropped by him. If he watched her, she seemed to shrink from his scrutiny; and yet her manner was one which encouraged him. Her gentle welcome had a familiar tenderness in it to him, which was given to none besides; and she would turn from the wittiest and most brilliant of a brilliant circle, to listen to his most common-place remark. Frederick

Atkins was no coxcomb, but he could not resist the conviction that Mary saw and returned a partiality which with him became stronger each succeeding day. He had even caught her eyes fixed on him when he suddenly turned, and had heard her sigh as she withdrew her gaze. (How many a man has appropriated to himself, a sigh given to the memory of another!)

In spite of all proofs of a return on Mary's part, the declaration of attachment which Frederick Atkins at length ventured to make, was received with great and apparently painful surprise. No longer so cool and collected as in younger days: her nerves shaken by perpetual struggles, and her spirit weakened by concealed and enduring sorrow; Mary only shook her head faintly, and burst into tears, when her new lover made an eager offer of his heart and hand; but when he proceeded to

allude to his circumstances, and informed her that he was Lord Altonby's natural son, and by his father's will was entitled to a good fortune;—that Lady Clavering, during her lifetime, when Lord Altonby had no other child, treated him in all respects as one of her own sons, and requested her husband to allow him to be the constant companion of the young Claverings;—when with the sensitiveness peculiar to his position, he dwelt upon the advantages of society, &c., that this friendliness on the part of both families gave him, and fondly sought to prove to his hearer that her position would be even better when married to him than at present;—Mary stopped him.

Her manner was different from any he had ever seen her adopt; it was wild, rapid, and agitated. "You have known William Clavering all your life—you love him?" said she.

"As the dearest of brothers: and such he always was to me."

"Then for *his* sake, forgive me! I have not willingly deceived you—I have not knowingly led you on step by step to this confession—I have been a blind and selfish, but not an intentional cause of vexation to you. I have welcomed you as *his* friend—I have loved you as *his* companion;—we were engaged—a miserable accident broke it off—my brother hated him—and I believed I was doing my duty to my lost father, in abiding by the child his dying lips left to my care. But though I may never see his face again, I am still *his*, heart and soul for ever. Do not hate me! it has been a comfort to me to see you day by day—and if I have misled you—pity and forgive me!"

In all the sudden and bitter disappointment of the moment, Frederick Atkins retained his

generosity of feeling: he soothed and comforted his weeping companion: besought her to consider him as a friend—a brother;—to forget what had passed between them, and to believe in his unchanging esteem and regard; he comprehended instinctively, how powerful the feeling must have been, which forced from one so proud and so reserved, that passionate confession and appeal; he felt for the bowed and broken spirit, which permitted her woman's tongue to tell the tale; and he was eager in his endeavour to prove to her that he alone was to blame in having misunderstood her motives.

Mary smiled mournfully on him through her tears. "And now," said she, in a faltering voice, "one word more, and I have done; I have said to you what I never thought to say to human being; I fear far more than death any open quarrel between my brother, and William Clavering—do not let the words uttered in

my agony, find their way to *him*—do not repeat what has been wrung from me this day. I am changed, and weak, and foolish, or it could not have happened—you promise me?"

"I *do* promise!" and Mary was left alone.

The vexation and anxiety caused by this event, was speedily swallowed up in one of more importance. At the beginning of the carnival, Lionel Dupré had given a masqued ball, with superb illuminations, to which all in the dull town of Nice, who were capable of enjoying so fatiguing a gaiety, were invited. Lord Altonby and his daughters were there as a matter of course, and the success of the fête was such, that a repetition of it was enforced by a hundred nimble tongues and eloquent billets. While Lionel yet hesitated, during an animated discussion which took place in Lord Altonby's drawing-room, Lady Clarice stole towards him, and bending till her coral lips

almost touched his ear, she whispered one long hesitating sentence. The colour went and came on Lionel's cheek, and he consented to fix a day for a fête yet more magnificent than the preceding.

That day arrived, and fully justified the most ardent expectations. Lady Clarice Lyle was attired as Psyche, and as her father very justly remarked, was a vision of beauty, "such as the prime minister of any country might be proud to call his own." She was the star and idol of the ball, and her name was inscribed in small green lamps, over a portico wreathed with myrtle and tuberoses. The music floated merrily from the dancing-room to the terrace, and light laughing voices were heard from time to time, between its pauses. Mary Dupré, Frederick Atkins, and Lady Louisa Lyle, (who was not yet sufficiently strong to indulge in the exercise of dancing), sate together, quiet spec-

tators of the scene. Presently the beautiful Psyche, breathless and flushed with incessant waltzing, came towards them; she passed her arm round her sister's neck, and stood for a moment silently gazing at the moving crowd.

"Are you tired, Clarice?" said Lady Louisa.

"No—yes."

The dispirited tone in which she spoke, struck her companions. Mary looked up, and saw that her eyes were filled with tears. Apparently her sister made the same remark, for in another moment she said anxiously, "Has any thing vexed you, dearest?"

"No, nothing has vexed me;" answered she hurriedly, and she passed her hand across her eyes. "A beautiful night—a happy night—is it not? but I am a little tired: my *wings* ache," added she laughing. She sate down as she spoke, and leaned her head for a moment upon her sister's shoulder. "Give me your

bouquet, Lisa, it is fresher than mine," murmured she.

"Certainly, here it is."

"And here is mine for *you*," said Clarice jumping up, "mind you keep it till you see me again; I am going to dance now;" and in a few minutes, they saw her whirling through the giddy waltz, as light and as lovely as the spirit she was attired to represent.

The evening wore away; the guests departed; the hitherto crowded rooms were thinly peopled with scattered dancers. "I am tired to death," said Lady Louisa Lyle, "I wonder my father and Clarice do not appear."

Lord Altonby came as she concluded her sentence; he looked puzzled and displeased; "I cannot find your sister anywhere," said he, "I really must beg that this may not occur again; she is nearly seventeen, and much too old to play at hide and seek, like a romping child."

A vain search was made; the master of the house was also missing, and the truth became clear—Lionel had eloped with Lady Clarice, as the shortest way of securing the very doubtful consent of her father!

That father's distress was bitter, was vehement; and in the expressions he made use of,—in the utter confusion of his love for his child, and his political schemes for his beautiful daughter;—in his appeals to Heaven, and his allusions to such of his friends as were expected shortly to be in power;—in his frantic declaration of pursuing the young deserters, and his lament over the uselessness of the pains he had taken with Clavering,—there was something so ludicrous, that it would have called up a smile, but that the bystanders remembered that it *was* a father who mourned for his child.

On Mary he poured out the whole fury of his soul. In vain she protested her ignorance;

in vain she endeavoured to soothe him, and assured him of her sympathy with bitter tears; in vain she endeavoured to stem the curses which were heaped on her brother. Lord Altonby could not believe that all had been planned and executed without accomplices; and when the weeping Lady Louisa stretched out her hand and murmured, "*I* believe you," he rudely dragged her away.

There was silence; the lights went out one by one; the withering wreaths of flowers looked bruised and pale in the daylight, and a few faint illuminated letters were all that remained of Clarice's name.

Mary sat, her face buried in her hands; her thoughts wandering she scarcely knew where. "Surely we were to live together—to be all in all to each other! Surely he knelt to me, and persuaded me to give up all, and dwell with *him:* and now—where is he?"

She uncovered her face and looked up. Frederick Atkins was standing near, leaning against the pillars of the doorway.

"Pray go to rest now," said he, "if it is only to nerve yourself for to-morrow. They must have left letters or messages with some one, and only wish to gain delay. See, I have summoned your maid.—You will go to rest, will you not?"

And Mary wrung his hand, and left him.

Lord Altonby sent messengers to Rome, to Florence, to Naples. He described his daughter's beauty, her peculiar costume: he applied to the police: he offered enormous rewards; but in vain.

Lady Clarice had gratified at once her passion for Lionel, and her passion for disguises; her love for a stranger, and her love for doing something strange; had baffled pursuit by a girl's mad fancy, more completely than skill

or thought could have done, and in the dress of a peasant-boy, (her very hair matching the short auburn curls of her lover, who was similarly attired,) they had sailed direct for Sicily!

In the bouquet given during the ball by Clarice to her sister, were a few hurried lines, imploring her to procure pardon for the step she was about to take, and to persuade her father to receive Lionel as a son-in-law, with some passionate expressions of affection for the sister she was forsaking. A *P.S.* had been added, in which she said, she reproached herself when she thought of Mary Dupré; and begged "dear Louisa," to ask "dear Lady Dorrington," for "poor Clarice's" sake, to invite Mary to her house till she should write again.

Lionel had not apparently reflected on the utterly unprotected situation in which he had left his sister Mary. Neither line nor letter

could be found from him; only a formal note from the bankers' informed her that for the present *her* signature to the circular bills was to be taken in lieu of Mr. Dupré's, by that gentleman's orders.

Lady Dorrington, who was a fat, kind, highly-rouged old lady, who played whist and ecarté in a scarlet turban and flaxen wig every night, did immediately what poor Clarice had so unceremoniously requested.

Mary discharged most of her brother's servants,—had the house shut up,—and, for want of a better alternative, accepted the offered protection, with many thanks for a stranger's kindness and consideration.

Her heart softened towards Lady Clarice, when she found, that such as it was, this little scheme had been *her* thought. And the doubtful feelings respecting her brother, which Mary never confessed even to herself, might have

been guessed at, could any one have overheard her solemn ejaculation in favour of his bride: "God grant, poor little creature, that your rash attempt to work out your own happiness may answer!"

CHAPTER XII.

> I would be at the worst;—worst is my port,
> My harbour, and my ultimate repose.
>
> MILTON.

AFTER a while, Mary received a long affectionate and explanatory letter from her brother, with a few lines added by Clarice, hoping that her future home with them would be too happy, to allow of her regretting or resenting her brother's sudden disappearance.

They declared their intention of remaining in Sicily, till Lord Altonby should either forgive the young couple, or himself depart from Nice.

The latter event soon took place, and Mary received with a tearful welcome the runaway bride and her husband.

Clarice persisted that her father could not live without her, and would soon send for her home; and Lionel, satisfied with being in the first intoxication of a real passion, and feeling also that he was a much greater man at Nice than in London, resolved to await the expected summons from his wife's family where he was.

And thus two years rolled away, the message of forgiveness coming much more slowly than could have been anticipated by Lady Clarice, who knew not how much of policy and politics mingled with her father's evident affection and admiration for her.

In Lady Louisa Lyle's letters to her sister, which were frequent and kind, many grieving allusions were made to the determined silence preserved by the marquis on this subject, and she added that even Clavering's entreaties were of no avail, though he took advantage of his knowledge of her father's weak point, to praise very highly Mr. Dupré's talents, and to assure him that eventually he would be a distinguished man.

Clavering was mentioned in all these letters, and Lady Clarice used to read them aloud to Mary, still preserving the habit of crouching down at the feet of the person she was endeavouring to entertain.

His pursuits, his abode, his anxieties and his successes were thus faithfully, though unintentionally, forwarded to Mary. And when his father's death left him almost alone in the world, it was a satisfaction to her to hear that

the new Lord Clavering lived almost entirely with his uncle, Lord Altonby, and thus obtained a little quiet society, and the shadow of a home, to prevent his feeling entirely alone.

Nor was it possible at such a moment that Mary's thoughts should not revert with renewed bitterness to the circumstances which had divided them. It is ever a grinding and a wearing sorrow to be forced to live separated from what we love best, even when we know that they are happy, and in good health. But to feel that they are in sorrow, and we may not comfort them; in sickness, and we cannot be near them; in anxiety and we cannot share it with them:—*this* is a sorrow which is unendurable.

The hour of supposed mirth, when others amuse, others interest, and others occupy them, may excite a vague jealousy, which we struggle against as unworthy of our better natures;

but the hour of imagined loneliness, when fancy shows us that sad brow gazing into the cheerless fire of a solitary hearth, or bending listlessly over the uncompanioned task of studying a favourite author;—the hour of sickness and danger, when we see as in a painful vision, the parched lip cooled by a draught from another's hand—the feverish eye lifted to another's face—the languid head, lifted by another's care;—*these* are the hours which madden and wring our hearts, which teach us wild and impossible plans for uniting our destinies to those we love—which throw a false light and shade over human objects, reversing and magnifying their order and importance;—*these* are the hours in which we act that, which we live to repent, or die to expiate.

And even Mary, whose regulated feelings had been chastened by a life of continued trial, whose sobered imagination calmly reflected the

images from without; even she, when she had stolen from the home where her presence was no longer so incessantly required, to a lonely spot by the sea, where she might muse without interruption, forgot for a time the *real* in the *ideal.* Bending her vacant eyes on the blue waves that rippled to the shore, she would image to herself words and looks, long ago forgotten perhaps even by him who so occupied her thoughts, (for when did man ever recal a dream of love with woman's memory?) She wrote his name and threw it on the waters, as if imagining that a floating message could be borne to that distant land; and when the breeze which had scarcely force to curl the tiny waves, returned the fluttering and unmoistened paper, her heart sank, as if at an evil omen. She, who in stronger and happier days, had so scorned—no, not scorned, she was too gentle for the feeling—but had so

wondered at, the same species of folly in others, bowed an unwilling slave to the dreamy excitement of hopeless passion. Her yearning heart flew back to England and to Clavering with feverish longing, and it seemed to her, that it was for their hour of meeting that she lived. No definite view—no plan of hope—no vision of sharing his home, mingled with that strong desire; she was too wretched to make a future. To see his face—to hear his voice—to weep by his side—and then—what then? she knew not, cared not—after that visionary meeting all was blank—to kneel by his side and die!

Meanwhile, the married existence of the young and lovely Lady Clarice was not without storms. After the first flush of romance and passion had subsided, Lionel shewed the same selfishness and occasional forgetfulness towards his wife, that he had ever done to all who sur-

rounded him. He became impatient of contradiction, and easily roused to anger; sneers and harsh words were spoken, which once uttered are often repeated, and involuntarily remembered even through hours of tenderness; with an unequal and arbitrary exertion of authority, he indulged her wildest whims, when he himself was in the mood to endure them, and repressed at other times her most harmless wishes; and the result was, as might be expected, that Clarice grew even more unreasonable and ungovernable than formerly; and that disputes the most childish, in which neither would give way, ended, on his part, by a cold and bitter sneer, and on hers, by a frenzy of delirious passion. Clarice's violence was heightened by a continual and persevering jealousy; accustomed to be as much an only child as if she had never had a sister, to be thought a miracle of beauty and talent, and

every word noted and set down in the memory of those around her, she exacted the most incessant and unwearied attention, which Lionel was not always disposed to pay. He had baffled his rival—he had braved his superior—he had won the object of his love—and his thoughts now reverted to himself.

This all-pervading feeling Clarice saw not. She *had* talent, but it was of that peculiar sort which consists in a vivid fancy and great quickness of comprehension, or power of seizing rapidly what others would take the trouble to explain; what was unexplained she saw not at all. With a great deal of imagination, she had no observation whatever; and her vanity increased her blindness on certain points. For instance, it never occurred to her to study Lionel's disposition to *others*. Slight or neglect to herself she saw and felt immediately, and resented it bitterly; but neglect shewn to

others she perceived not, and therefore it was that while Lionel's occasional harshness was to her unaccountable, her angry and puzzled spirit drew a thousand wrong inferences, and that she attributed to inconstancy of preference, what, if she had been able to judge more clearly, she would have seen resulted from absorbing selfishness;—a selfishness suspended for a time by a stronger passion, and gradually flowing back into its accustomed channels, to chill not only her, but all who depended on Lionel's affections. There was not a woman in Nice who had not, at one time or other, excited Clarice's jealousy; there was not an acquaintance who had not been made the subject of reproach to her husband, and of wild and passionate complaint to her patient and enduring sister-in-law.

These disputes, however, though violent when they occurred, were not frequent. Cla-

rice really adored Lionel, and Lionel liked his wife, even now, better than any thing, even his sister Mary. She had also a power over him, stronger than affection in the heart of a selfish man—she amused him; he could not have lived a day without being gazed at by those strange, wild, intelligent eyes; listening to that rapid enumeration of odd fancies and romantic dreams; and watching the restless eagerness of her graceful movements. All that excitability of mind and manner which Clavering saw with regret and disapprobation, had a charm for Lionel; it amused him to watch and guess her, as it might have amused him to watch the habits and instincts of some playful and beautiful animal. He never checked her, except when she bored him; he never advised her to be quiet, except when he himself was weary; he would have stared in surprise, could Clavering have communicated to him his doubts

and fears on the subject of her future. It added to his present happiness, that Lady Clarice should be what she was, the strangest compound of good and bad, of cleverness and mad folly, of weakness and strength, that ever came into this teeming world; it added to his present happiness (which was to be found in strong excitement), that his wife should be something between an adoring woman and a termagant child; and whether it was eventually to add to, or to take away from *hers*, he never thought, and scarcely cared.

We have seen that Clavering doubted his power to alter the "ways" of his lovely cousin, during their companionship at Lord Altonby's. Perhaps he was right—perhaps in that wayward disposition impulse would ever have been stronger than reason or affection; and he might have lived to regret the experiment, which so much charm and fascination had tempted

him to make. Such women, in romances, break their hearts and die; such women, in real life, destroy the destinies of others, and live. But be that as it may, the ruin of heart and disposition in one who from the beginning, was less fitted for a wife than a mistress, was more rapid and certain under the *no*-care of Lionel, than it could have been under the firmly indulgent guardianship of Clavering.

Nor was Mary's natural good sense, or her acquired opinions, of service in the present instance. Unaccustomed to enjoy the society of a young female companion, naturally indulgent, and conscious that her own girlhood had been prematurely saddened into thoughtfulness, she allowed the charm of a new affection to steal over her heart, excusing all of which she was forced to disapprove, by the thought of the extreme youth of the offender, and involuntarily perhaps yielding to the fascination of the

unequalled beauty of Clarice's imploring and tearful face, when, conscious of having erred, she came like a sorrowful child to be forgiven.

For nearly three years matters continued in this state, but in the third year of his marriage circumstances occurred, which made Lionel anxious to return to England. Lady Clarice Dupré was soon to become a mother.

Perhaps the only few months in which Lionel actually forgot himself in a keen anxiety for the comfort of another, were those in which he was occupied, taking care of the wild young creature who never took care of herself, and during this time she acquired more than ever the habit of having her own way. Her whims were law, her caprices necessities: and the man who from his infancy had allowed nothing to control him, became the slave of all a pretty woman's fancies.

Let it not be thought that the character of

such a man could suddenly alter. It was not *all* fondness and fear for the fragile girl who was to be his child's mother; nor was it the deep and *planning* tenderness of a young father for his expected son. Lionel had already been a father: the father of Annie Morrison's lost baby, Frank; and we have seen that he cared little for the existence of that pledge of early love and selfish treachery. But with Lady Clarice's infant came other dreams.—Moreton Park became an hereditary possession. His connexion with the great and noble families of Altonby and Clavering, seemed more certain and acknowledged. The obscure merchant's son claimed good blood in his mother's right, and his name was to be a known name in England. Lord Altonby might still persist in refusing to forgive his daughter, but she was not the less the mother of a marquis's grand-child—of an earl's grand-nephew. Lionel triumphed

—he exulted—he prayed that it might be a son; and he determined to take Lady Clarice to Moreton, that his heir might be born there.

A letter had just been dispatched to Lady Louisa, begging her to state Lady Clarice's situation, and make one more appeal to her angry father, when two letters addressed to the expecting mother, were brought; one in the hand-writing of her sister, and the other, to her astonishment, that of her father himself. Eagerly she opened the latter, she saw that it was a summons home, and flung down the few formal lines to read her sister's.

From habit, Clarice read aloud, and from habit and obstinacy, she persisted in sitting on the low ottoman, at Mary's feet, while she made her partaker of the contents of her letter. On the present occasion, Lionel was beside her, tenderly supporting her, and soothing her into quiet at every fresh ejaculation of amazement

and joy. Lady Louisa's letter was a very hurried one.

"Come home, my own sweet sister; come home, Clarice; if you can read the blotted words, through my tears of joy, come home! Strange things have happened and joyful; the gladdest of all is the thought that I shall see your dear bright face again. But I must tell you, as connectedly as I can, what has occurred. Yesterday, at dinner, Clavering was particularly sad: it was the anniversary of his brother Henry's birth-day, and he scarcely spoke a word; at last my father said, 'Come, William, this will never do; finish your glass, and we will go to the drawing-room and Lisa shall play the harp to cheer you.'—(I have practised the harp a great deal since I grew strong and well.)—For a minute or two Clavering did not answer, and then he sighed (oh! such a heavy

sigh), and he leaned his head on his hand and said, 'There are few things that cheer me now.' Well, I don't know how it was, but I was so vexed at seeing him in such low spirits, and so hurt at the thought that *I* could not cheer him (for you recollect how merry he used to be with you), that I burst into tears. Then of course I was very much ashamed of such a folly; and I left the dining-room very quickly and went to my own room.

"In about ten minutes my father came to me, so flurried, and so happy, and called me his kind and blessed child, and the sweet names he used to give *you*, Clarice; and then he told me, Clavering wanted to marry me, and that half his sadness was the doubt whether I would accept him!—To doubt that!—I certainly never thought of him, or, indeed, of any man,—I thought myself too plain, and too foolish—it never came into my mind to look forward to

any marriage but yours, bright and beautiful sister; but when it *was* told me, I was so wildly happy that I felt I must have loved him all along.

"I was very much frightened, and wished to put off seeing Clavering till the next morning; but my father took me down stairs with *him*, and William rose as I came in, and took my hand in a kind quiet way, and said with a smile, 'I hope you have said *yes*.' I scarcely remember what I answered, but I know I thanked him for thinking of me, and said a number of things *you* would have thought too humble and silly, Clarice, for a woman; but you had more right to be proud than I. Then he sate down by me, and said a great many encouraging things about my disposition, and the comfort I should be to him, and that he would show me that he knew how to value a home. He must have thought me very

foolish, for I could not help crying, and I could not speak; but it was a great happiness to sit by him, holding his hand, and settling our future plans.—(*Ours;* oh! Clarice, think of poor *me*, living to be Clavering's wife!)—Though even then, he seemed sad and abstracted—I felt almost sure at one time that he forgot I was by him, and he started so when I spoke, and said, 'I beg your pardon,' in such a cold strange voice.—Oh! I hope he loves me! If he did not indeed, why should he wish to marry me?—but when I think how clever and perfect he is; all this seems a happy dream; however since it has been told to the few friends I have seen, I find it is no surprise to any one but me."

"Old Lady Latimer laughed, and said I must be very simple not to have seen that my father always meant him for one of us, and that people expected nothing else, living as we

have done lately so much together; and Clavering having no one to gladden him but ourselves. I never liked old Lady Latimer, she always takes such a cold harsh view of things; and even if my dear father did wish Clavering to marry me, he could not oblige him to do it unless it suited him, and I hope he will never have cause to repent making me his wife. It will be such happiness to me, to see him smile again! I never saw any smile like his—so noble and proud, and yet so full of kindliness.

"How selfishly I have written! How I have run on talking of my own happiness and forgetting yours!

"The moment it was all settled, my father told me that I might write to you, and tell you he forgave every thing; and wished you to return. He will not consent to delay the wedding, because he imagines that, perhaps, Mr. Dupré may not choose immediately to re-

turn; but he will meet you at Paris, as soon as he receives news of your coming over; and then I hope you will come to Clavering Park, to your ever affectionate sister,

"LOUISA."

Lord Altonby's letter was more concise:—

"MY DEAR CLARICE,

"You *were*, as you well know, my favourite child, till you chose to unite yourself with a young man without rank or family, and totally destitute of any weight or influence whatever. You have deeply grieved, and unexpectedly disappointed me; but at this moment of success, when your excellent sister is about to unite herself with a man, who, I doubt not, will eventually be the leader of the Whig party, as he is already its ornament and support, I cannot resist her entreaties to recal you to your

home. Trusting that you will return in good health, and that your husband will endeavour to distinguish himself, which Clavering tells me is very possible,

"I remain, your affectionate,

"Though mortified father,

"ALTONBY."

It must not be supposed that the vivacious Lady Clarice read these letters uninterruptedly, as they are here set down. A thousand exclamations of wonder, of triumph, and of delight, broke every sentence, and closed almost every paragraph. As her task was completed, she clasped her hands and said, "Well I am so glad Lisa is to be married! I always thought she would be an old maid; though she is very pretty, with a *pale* prettiness;" and Clarice stole a glance in an opposite mirror, at her own beaming and glowing face. "Somehow,

I had never thought of her marrying; but I am delighted it is to be. I could not bear to be an old maid myself. An old maid is always neglected and overlooked, she is always made of use to every body, and yet she is nobody's *first object*,—I could not bear that!"

Mary had heard all, she had drank in every syllable, she had felt all the bitterness of the sudden blow, and received all the consolation which could be afforded, by the sentence in Lady Louisa's letter which alluded to Clavering's sadness and abstraction, even when arranging his marriage; and by the conviction that Lord Altonby had, probably, taken advantage of his daughter's tears, on the occasion referred to, to work upon his nephew's feelings, and persuade him the best cure for his depressed spirits, would be the presence of a young and affectionate wife. But what could that avail to comfort her?

She shrank away, she dared not weep; she prisoned back the hot tears under her burning eyelids; she turned away her pale and haggard cheek, that her companions might not witness her emotion. She trembled lest Clarice should wonder, lest Lionel should reproach himself for her sake. Alas! poor Mary; the painful effort was needlessly made; in the excitement of the hour *she* was forgotten. Clarice dreamed of her home, her father, and her sister. Lionel, in fancy, stood on his own estate, lighting bonfires for the birth of his infant heir. Neither of her companions heeded her faint and heavy step as she crept from the room to weep in solitude; neither of them chided her silence, or entreated her to stay. *She* had no share in the schemes of her brother, or the glad expectations of his bride; *she* was to be alone in England as she had been at Nice; her youth was fleeting by, and she was no longer any one's *first object.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Why shouldst thou weep? why struggle? why complain?
Why evermore gaze forward or look back?
'Tis all determined for thee, all arranged,
Ere those dim eyes were open'd to the light;—
It is thy fate, weak heart, it is thy *fate!*

When Lady Clarice Dupré arrived in England, her sister and Lord Clavering were absent, the latter having taken the opportunity of his marriage to visit his Irish estates.

Their meeting was therefore deferred for a while; and while the impatient Clarice re-

sented, regretted, and reproached in a breath, this unintentional slight, Mary rejoiced that time was allowed her to think of the lover of her youth as the husband of another, before she was perhaps compelled to see him. She began to dread meeting him again, as much as she formerly desired it; and from time to time a vague and desponding wish crossed her mind, to hide herself in a remote corner of the world, and live or die, as it might please God, in quiet obscurity.

The worry and vexation of the occasional disputes between Lionel and his wayward bride, was trying to a person naturally as well as habitually, of composed and peaceful habits. Nor can it be denied that many causes contributed to make Mary less patient under small vexations than heretofore. She no longer felt so necessary to her brother's every-day happiness, as, in spite of transient misunderstand-

ings, she had always done before he married. She had no longer the elasticity of hope, which, by brightening the future, makes present trials easy. Her cheek lost its smoothness; her step became jaded and slow; her voice varied from a low dispirited murmur, to abrupt and sharp tones, such as it had never before known; and she no longer exerted herself so cheerfully for the entertainment or comfort of others.

At length Lionel's fondest wishes were realized. Lady Clarice became the mother of a lovely boy; and the tenantry of Moreton roasted an ox whole, lit bonfires, and drank his health with such deafening cheers, that the sound faintly reached the curtained and shady room where the tiny object of their rejoicings lay, wrapt in rich muslin mantles, and buried in the down cushion of his cradle.

To most young couples, the "unto us a child is born," seems something so astonishing

and remarkable, that one would imagine they had never looked forward to it as a probable result of their union, nor even observed that their friends also had children. Every young father and mother looks upon their "first baby" as Adam and Eve must have looked at Cain, (that first specimen of a man-child born into the world), with delight, wonder, and something of triumph in their own creative ingenuity.

And it is a happy instinct which enables us to value these little prizes so highly; and a curious thing to reflect, as we stumble through the Parks knee-deep in children, that there is not one little unit in those diminutive millions, that has not (God bless it!) a circle of admiring relatives to whom it is the prettiest, the dearest, the cleverest,—in fact the *only* child that ever was worth a thought.

But no infant that ever was cradled, (no,

not even the heir to a throne), could have obtained more exclusive and devoted attention than Charles Lyle Saxelby Dupré, infant son and heir to Lionel Dupré, Esq., of Moreton Park, Yorkshire.

The most extravagant costliness was visible in all that surrounded him; gold pap-boats, and lace robes; satin embroidered coverlets and white plumes; all that the invaluable nurse who had lived with the Duchess of Mountarlington when she had *her* first baby, considered advisable and requisite to enable her to do justice to "the little cherub;" and in justice to that respectable person, it should be allowed that the little cherub throve under her management *almost* as well as if a rosy farmer's wife had nursed it at her own cottage door, in the sunshine of the open day.

Clarice was enchanted: and though nothing could be less motherly and matronly than her

ways with her baby; though she occasionally pulled him out of his cot, and kissed him awake, that she might show how very blue his eyes were; though she insisted on letting him taste caudle and christening-cake, and was caught by the nurse dipping a feather in a glass of wine, that he might thus moderately drink the health of the assembled company; still she passionately loved her child; and it amused Lionel excessively to see her steal into a corner, and crouching down as if she had brought a kitten to play with, sing wild extempore songs to it, sometimes expressive of her own affection, and sometimes in a prophetic spirit tracing out its career to manhood and old age. Every possible and impossible fate was shadowed forth in these lullabys; and every day she wove a new one.

One day as she sat at Lionel's feet watching the pretty features of the little being in her

arms, she suddenly said, "What a strange feeling it must be, my own Leo, not to love the father of one's child."

"What made you think of that, Clarice?"

"I don't know exactly. I was looking at my baby, and wondering whether he would be like you or me, and hoping it would be like *you*. Oh! you cannot think how I love it when it lifts its little eyebrows, and makes a wide startled eye like you when you are surprised. Its eyes are *so* like yours." And she stooped, and fervently kissed the smooth closed lids as she spoke.

"Well, and does its likeness to me make you think of not loving its father?"

"No, no!" said Clarice, as she playfully kissed her husband's hand, "but the thought *did* strike me; and then I thought of all feelings that must be the most miserable."

She mused silently for a while, and then,

rocking herself gently backwards and forwards, she commenced a sort of broken chaunt, evidently still allowing her restless fancy to feed on the thought to which she had given utterance.

It was a beauteous lady, richly dress'd;
Around her neck are chains of jewels rare,
A velvet mantle shrouds her snowy breast,
And a young child is softly slumbering there.
In her own arms, beneath that glowing sun,
She bears him onward to the greenwood tree;
Is the dun heath, thou fair and thoughtless one,
The place where an earl's son should cradled be?
Lullaby!

Though a proud earl be father to my child,
Yet on the sward my blessed babe shall lie;
Let the winds lull him with their murmurs wild,
And toss the green boughs upwards to the sky:
Well knows that earl how long my spirit pined;
I loved a forester, glad, bold, and free,
And had I wedded as my heart inclined,
My child were cradled 'neath the greenwood tree.
Lullaby!

Slumber thou still, my innocent — mine own,
  While I call back the dreams of other days;
In the deep forest I feel less alone,
  Than when those palace splendours mock my gaze.
Fear not! my arm shall bear thee safely back;
  I need no squire, no page with bended knee,
To bear my baby through the wild wood track,
  Where Allan Percy used to roam with me.
    Lullaby!

Here I can sit, and while the fresh wind blows,
  Waving the ringlets of thy shining hair,
Giving thy cheek a deeper tinge of rose,
  I can dream dreams that comfort my despair;
I can make visions of a different home,
  Such as we hoped in other days might be;
There no proud earl's unwelcome footsteps come,
  There, Allan Percy, I am safe with thee!
    Lullaby!

Thou art mine own — I'll bear thee where I list,
  Far from the dull proud tower and donjon keep;
From my long hair the pearl-chains I'll untwist,
  And with a peasant's heart, sit down and weep!

Thy glittering broider'd robe, my precious one,
Changed for a simpler covering shall be;
And I will dream thee Allan Percy's son,
And think poor Allan guards thy sleep with me.
Lullaby!

Such were the fanciful strains in which Lady Clarice indulged, and often she would sing and murmur these ballads for hours together, heeding not the presence or absence of Mary or her husband, but evidently finding intense pleasure in the ideal world she was hourly creating. Meanwhile her gradual restoration to health, by destroying Lionel's anxiety about her, made him much less willing to yield to her caprice. Again Clarice was puzzled at the change in her husband's demeanour, and after visiting separately with her wrath the usual Moreton men, who gladly spared a fortnight from other amusements to congratulate Lionel, and fall in love with his wife; after

abusing Sopsy, Jack Conolly, and the Lark, with the most angry vehemence, she at last quarrelled with Mary. She was sure Mary did mischief; she might not mean it, but she certainly did; and Lionel, when displeased with his wife could always seek the society of his sister; so that involuntarily, Mary was made obnoxious to Lady Clarice, who had no female acquaintances at Moreton on whom she could fix her superabundant jealousy.

Nor was it only to Lady Clarice that Mary gave umbrage. To Lionel himself—Lionel, for whose sake she had made the greatest sacrifice woman's heart can make, she seemed occasionally a troublesome inmate, a resource for his angry and girlish wife when she wished to pout and be sullen after one of her storms of passion; a barrier between them when they had quarrelled. And, indeed, the person who has the misfortune to be the mutual confidant

and mutual friend of a married couple, is generally in the end a burthen to both, and does in real fact, however unintentionally, prolong disputes, and rather increase than diminish the inclination to quarrel. Many a time, when Lionel was cross and bitter, Clarice thought, "Well, Mary cannot defend him *now*—Mary will comfort me; I shall go and sit in the nursery with my baby and Mary;" and on his part, Lionel would mutter—"Let her pout; she will have time to reason herself back into good humour, for I shall go and make Mary read to me in the library." Then the appeals made by both parties.—"*Is* this just, Mary? do not even *you* allow this to be capricious and tyrannical?" from the wife;—and "Come, Mary, you are a woman, and therefore I appeal to you, whether it is proper that Clarice should do so and so?" from the husband;—forcing a decision which *must* offend one of the

parties, and which, of course, made the one sided with, doubly vehement and obstinate. Perhaps, had they been left entirely to themselves, Clarice, who was both impatient and affectionate, would never have been able to spend a whole evening without speaking to her husband; or Lionel, who particularly required to be amused, would for his own sake have coaxed his only companion into good humour. At all events, they *thought* they should agree better if they were obliged to depend entirely and solely on each other's society, and the belief was enough to make Mary's presence in her brother's house, at times rather irksome than otherwise.

CHAPTER XIV.

We parted—with wild bursting sobs,
And murmured doubts, and racking fears;—
We met—and not a word was said,—
That sorrow, was too great for tears!

BALLAD OF THE BRIDE.

THE much-dreaded moment, when the Claverings announced their return to town, and the opening of the session rendered it necessary for Lionel to recommence his parliamentary exertions, at length arrived. Mary did make a faint effort to remain at Moreton, and urged

that she would be of more use there than in London, and preferred the quiet of the country. Lionel's answer was characteristic.

"My dear sister, I don't doubt you like Moreton best; but what am I to do with Clarice? She is much too young and too giddy to do without a companion older than herself. I shall be too much occupied to watch her, and she will get into all sorts of odd scrapes if she goes about alone. I shall have her dancing till four in the morning, and flirting with half the fools in London, out of pure idleness."

"But Lady Clarice has a sister, Leo, whose habits of life are very quiet—whose health would not bear such exertions; and with *her* ——"

"Nonsense!" said Lionel, his brow darkening, and his eye flashing; "I married Clarice—not her family. Occasional visits from her sister, of course I shall expect; but if she

thinks that, after her father's conduct towards *me*, I shall either consider myself at home in his house, or allow her to spend all her time there, she is mistaken. Still less shall I permit *my* house to be a place where Lord Clavering may walk in and out, like a tame dog. Lady Clarice is mine now, and it is my pleasure that she should go about with *my* father's daughter, and not Lord Altonby's—*my* sister, and not *hers*."

The fact was, Lionel had never felt thoroughly convinced that the hated Clavering had not endeavoured to engage Clarice's affections; and for this very reason he perhaps thought less of the sacrifice Mary had made in breaking off with him. After the first two or three days of joyous meeting therefore between the two sisters, it was a constant subject of dispute, how much or how little Lady Clarice Dupré was to be permitted

to see of her own family; and her wrath was unbounded at the idea of any restriction on the intercourse between herself and her "own poor darling affectionate Lisa."

She sometimes reasoned with Lionel, but was oftener outrageous; and from these frenzies of passion, Lionel turned with a cold sneer, (unless as was very rare he was roused to equal vehemence,) and Mary with a pained and sickened heart.

During all this time, Miss Dupré and Lord Clavering never met. He never offended Lionel by walking like a tame dog in and out of his house, and the evenings which he spent in the House of Lords, and which Clarice would willingly have passed with her more quiet sister, were, by Lionel's continual worrying prohibitions, oftener devoted to the very employment he had deprecated, viz. dancing, if not till four in the morning, at least till long after

Mary was completely wearied out. If Lionel endeavoured to prevent this, by alleging that *he* could not go to the ball that night, and that so young a wife should not be seen without her husband and natural protector, she baffled him by saying, "then I shall make my father go; I can go with my own father. It is very hard indeed if I may not dance *now*, when you know I never came out before I was married. You don't mean me to turn into an old woman at once. You are not half so strict in reality as Clavering, and yet you are less indulgent."

This last style of argument was one which Lady Clarice used too often. She did it innocently, and did not perceive the effect on her husband's mind; for in deciding, (as she imagined,) between her two suitors, and marrying Lionel, she thought she had lulled every sentiment of jealousy, and suffi-

ciently proved her affection for him. And now, worried as she was by unexpected opposition, she was continually asserting that Clavering would not do this; and Clavering would not object to that; till Lionel's hate increased, and he was roused to passions which terrified even his bride.

Clarice also got into another habit, which would have equally provoked Lionel had he known it. She coquetted amazingly with her partners at the ball, and her morning visitors. She really loved and admired Lionel more than any human being; but the intense vanity of her mind restlessly sought to prove how charming she was in the eyes of others; and on the evenings when Lionel had offended her, she lent a more apparently attentive ear, and smiled more graciously on the whispering of coxcombs; not that she really thought them her husband's superiors, or even his equals,

but because her mortified spirit could say--"Ah! *he* may think little of me, and scold me, but to every one else I am perfection." And she danced merrily, and gazed brightly and boldly into the eyes of her admirers, though perhaps at that very moment she would have given worlds to have been at home, her head leaning on Lionel's shoulder, forgiving and forgiven.

Sopsy, or, as he was more correctly called in the London world, Captain Altamont Percy, was the most sedulous of her adorers; it was *the* great passion of his life; and he, who was rather overlooked among his Melton companions, as "a good fellow, but a monstrous bore," was a very bright star in a ball-room; the best waltzer and mazurka dancer, the handsomest man, and the most agreeable singer in the world.

Every species of merit must have its pecu-

liar atmosphere, or it becomes neutralized. A pretty woman on board a steam-packet, in very rough weather, when every one is below sea-sick; a great mathematician at a Twickenham boat-race; a Scotch gentleman who "wears the kilt uncommonly well" in a London drawing-room; a capital fencer and swordsman at a rural sheep-shearing;—all are so misplaced for the time, that their value is not perceived or acknowledged: but change their positions, and lo! the beauty who was left to the care of the weather-beaten steward and busy stewardess of the "James Watt," surrounded by slaves and worshippers—the mathematician, an oracle before whom other men keep silence—the active Highlander, the glory of the "Perth hunt", (alias Perth ball)—the skilful swordsman, the terror of some obstinate duellist, and hero in some "affair of honour" which fills the papers for a month!

And thus it was with Sopsy. Among rational and talking beings he was a cypher; among the active and high-spirited of his "set" at Melton he was a good-humoured bore; among chaperons and mothers he was a dangerous detrimental; and among their daughters and the gayer portion of London wives, he was (give me a name for the species, dear Venus!) the sort of man for whom all the women try—about whom they all quarrel and are jealous among themselves—and who nevertheless *can* do the unmarried ones no good, and will probably do the reputation of the married ones a great deal of harm. They are as regular and distinct a race, as if Noah had preserved a pair of human beings on purpose to continue it. They are all handsome, or nearly so; all pennyless, or nearly so; all accomplished, or nearly so; and are remarkable for the neatness of their *chaussure*, and the care with which

they trim their whiskers. They wear well-chosen and tasteful waistcoats, belong to Crockford's, are very idle, invent improvements in cabs, and eat small portions of excellent dinners with eagerness and satisfaction. They are mostly good-natured, and in some of them the heart is apparent and visible.

To the latter division belonged Sopsy; he *had* a heart, and a kind one, though it beat under a velvet waistcoat; he was, without exception, the best-tempered man in the three kingdoms; though foolish, he had never been in a scrape; though poor, he contrived not only to keep out of debt, but to make an allowance to his mother; and though a thorough man of the London world, he was yet a good deal shocked, puzzled, and distressed, when he found himself desperately and irremediably in love with the lovely wife

of his best friend, Lionel Dupré, Esq., of Moreton Park.

Clarice could not be said to encourage him as a *lover*, for she granted him only the portion of smiles and *coquetteries*, accorded to a hundred others; but she felt a secret satisfaction in seeing the man about whom all the women were occupied, entirely occupied with *her;* and the warnings of Jack Conolly, (who took upon himself the office of Mentor to his friend's inexperienced wife),—the simply expressed surprise of the unworldly Mary, as to "what she could see to like in him;"—and, above all, the endeavours of a certain showy widow, who had contrived to become Lady Alfred Arlington, to appropriate the said Captain Percy to herself; caused Lady Clarice to take more pains to rivet the chains of her prisoner, than she was conscious herself.

Lady Clavering regretted the loss of her sister's society—but never dreamed of Lionel's motives for coming so little to Lord Altonby's, and for never coming at all to her own home. She thought Lionel a very anxious and busy politician, a little wounded and angry at her father's dislike to receive him as a son-in-law; and she thought Clarice gay, almost too gay, in her pursuit of the world's pleasures.

One morning she wrote a note to her sister, containing two orders for the gallery of the House of Lords, and the following lines:—

"I send you Clavering's order, and my father's, my own dear little sister, that you may (if you and Miss Dupré like it,) hear the debate to-day in the House of Lords. Do go, dear Clarice, if it does not fatigue you; I think it would please my father to see you

take an interest in something besides balls and opera-boxes, and I am sure you, who are so clear-headed and clever, will derive both amusement and information from a couple of hours spent in this way. In fact, it is in consequence of an expressed wish of my father's that I proposed your going, and he will take you in if you like it. You need not dress at all, just go in your bonnet and shawl, and if you go early, you will find a tolerably comfortable seat. I am taking care of myself just now, so do not like to brave the heat, but Miss Dupré can make use of Clavering's order.

"Ever your affectionate,

"LISA C.

"P.S. I rather think Clavering will speak."

"To be sure I will go!" said Lady Clarice, aloud. "Why it is a new pleasure; why does

my father imagine I like balls and operas, better than anything else? I am sure I would much rather hear Clavering speak, than go to a birth-day at St. James's. Mary, for once here is something to tempt you, which is not always the case with the pleasures your selfish sister-in-law proposes." And with a coaxing smile she presented the order.

A faint flush passed over Mary's cheek as she took it. It was so long since she had seen Clavering's hand writing,—so long! and now the few formal words in his hand were read, and re-read, with an abstraction which did not escape Lady Clarice.

"What are you dreaming about?" said she; "you need not bestow such a very attentive perusal on the paper; there is nothing but 'admit the bearer to the gallery of the House of Lords,' written on it, is there?"

"Nothing else," said Mary, and in her tone there was the sound of despair.

Clarice laid down her hat with its blue *pleureuse*, and fixing her eyes on her companion, she said, "Do you know Lord Clavering?"

"Yes."

"Did he ever call upon you?"

"He visited my grand-aunt, who was a relation of his."

"While you were there?—well, it's very odd,—I never heard him mention you—and he does not seem fond of Lionel; it's *very* odd," continued she, musing. "I'll ask Lisa whether he ever talks about you both to her."

"I entreat, Lady Clarice;" said Mary starting, but she checked herself with a stifled sigh.

Lady Clarice Dupré coloured, and a vague curiosity sprung up in her heart, to know whether there was any other reason for her

husband's dislike of her brother-in-law, besides the old jealousy on *her* account. "Perhaps he paid attention to Mary, and jilted her," thought the young wife, "and yet he was not a flirt. It certainly is all very odd, Lionel's excessive dislike, and his never coming here to see us, and his never having mentioned that he knew Mary; and the way she spoke when she held that slip of paper. Poor Mary! I hope she is not unhappy; she is very grave sometimes, but people *are* grave when they get to be her age; indeed she is very sweet-tempered for one who really is almost an old maid."—And the beautiful *married* Lady Clarice, looked at herself in the glass, as she adjusted her blue plume, and admired the brightness of the face on which twenty summers had scarcely shone; and still glancing in the mirror over her shoulder, she beheld the pale and faded coun-

tenance of her sister-in-law—gazing again at the order for the House of Lords. "It *is* very odd," said Lady Clarice to herself, and they drove to Lord Altonby's, who had promised to take them in.

Sopsy, alias Captain Altamont Percy, and Bedlam Jack, alias Mr. Conolly, had probably seen the carriage stop at the well-known door, for they both "dropped in" soon after the arrival of the two ladies, and remained chatting and laughing over a late luncheon, till Lord Altonby said, "my love, if you intend to hear the debate, you had better come *now*."

In consequence of this agreeable delay, Lady Clarice and her companion were later than was at all desirable, when proceeding to the gallery of the old House of Lords, devoted to the exclusive accommodation of ladies: for the fair individuals who occupied it, made

up for the habitual apathy of *bon ton*, by showing in their determination to take and to keep their places,—in their resolve to listen to the side they approved of, and indignantly to whisper and exclaim during the speeches they did *not* approve,—that they *could* be eager about something.

> It isn't often, that they do these things,
> But when they *do*, they do 'em handsomely,—

and when Mary entered with Lady Clarice, a murmur and an angry stare; a shrugging of the shoulders of some, and a suffocated pant from others; a glance at the choked-up door, and occupied seats, all said as plain as gestures could speak,—

"What upon earth do you mean by coming amongst us *now*: don't you see we are fidgetty and uncomfortable already: that the gallery is too full, and the day too hot? You are in-

truders, and if we could, we would turn you out, instead of letting you in."

Clarice complained immediately to her father of the crowd and pressure, and returned their angry scrutiny with a displeased knitting of her beautiful eyebrows, and a determined step forwards. Mary saw nothing—observed nothing—she was still regretting the slip of paper with Clavering's signature, which she had relinquished at the entrance of the gallery!

Lord Altonby peeped into the lady's gallery with a puzzled and vexed face, to see whether there really was space for the two additional listeners he had brought. A tall and highly rouged lady, who knew Lord Altonby very well, and indulged a hope that after the session was over, and his mind more at rest, he would find leisure to make her the second Lady Altonby, turned her head; and seeing who it was, immediately changed the somewhat haughty

and resolute expression of her countenance to a bland and gracious smile.

"I fear there is very little room," whispered the marquis.

"Very little indeed," answered the lady.

"Hush!" said two female politicians on the second bench, angrily turning to the speakers.

Not vouchsafing the smallest notice of this interruption, the tall lady added, "who is with you?"

"Lady Clarice Dupré, my youngest daughter."

"Dear me, could you doubt for a moment that *I* would make room for *your* daughter?" and a sort of fierce and haggard tenderness brightened the eye of the would-be marchioness, as beckoning and pushing, she at length contrived to seat the Lady Clarice by her side.

The marquis retreated, with a thankful murmur, and Mary remained standing; the fatigue

of which position was compensated in some measure by a good view of the house. The tall lady braved the wrath of the whole party in the gallery, in order to make her "darling Lady Clarice" aware who the speakers were, and to which previous speaker they occasionally alluded.

Mary profited by this information, though it was not addressed to her, and became much interested in the debate; but they had hardly sate there half an hour, before one of those violent summer storms of thunder and lightning came on; which, as it flashed through the sky-light immediately near them, and deafened them with its growling rolling sound, made it much more difficult to hear what was going on.

"Are *you* afraid of thunder and lightning?" said the tall lady eagerly, to Clarice.

"Afraid!" said the little heroine, with a

proud smile; "No—I am not easily frightened; but why?"

"Because those people in the second row *are*. It is old Lady Simpeing and her daughters; you will see they'll go away, and then we will go down and take their places."

This ingenious plan was put into execution. Lady Simpeing, after smelling her salts once or twice, rose and whispered her daughters to follow her, and her place was instantly occupied.

"Come down here, Mary," said Clarice, as she seated herself. But Mary heard her not. She required no information from the tall lady as to the name of the speaker who had just risen; one hurried agitated glance gave her the noble brow and distinguished figure of William Clavering, prepared to exert his power of persuading and convincing, not over *her* weak heart or inferior understanding, but on

the minds of men; his equals, nay, perhaps some, his superiors in actual talent, many of whom were envious and angry foes—many, cold and doubting listeners—and *all* capable of rebutting and answering (with different degrees of eloquence) the arguments he might bring forward. The mournful heart which had so long been hushed, throbbed with painful excitement; the first few sentences sounded in her ear like the indistinct murmur of a waterfall. Then the chilled blood flowed back to its source, her cheek seemed more than usually pale, and her eye rivetted as if by some strange fascination on the eager frankness of Clavering's countenance. She saw him, in his hour of glory; she saw him, and forgot for a while that it was no longer an *allowed* interest in her heart; that when that long fatiguing evening was over, he would be welcomed by *another* to the rest and peace of his home, while *she*

crept from the presence of the lively Clarice, and impatient Lionel, to the solitude of her own room; there to *un*-dream all the wild and fevered creations of that hour of excitement, and to struggle against that long cherished and deeply rooted affection, as a folly and a sin.

All—she forgot it all! The lightning flashed, and the loud thunder rolled and died away above her head, and ever between the pauses of the storm, she caught the full and even tones of that majestic voice, whose energetic melody had been lost to her for three long years. She stood absorbed—entranced. It was thus she had often imagined him, while sitting with old Mrs. Bolton, in Spring Gardens, enjoying the quiet and happy consciousness that the evenings not occupied in the turbulent struggles of public life, were devoted exclusively to *her*. It was thus she had seen him in the faint but faithful portraiture of her midnight

dreams, when they were yet vowed to each other. That peaceful time was past away—that vow broken by her own sentence,—but she remembered it not: it seemed to her that there he stood, *her* Clavering; fulfilling the arduous duties of a public career, and thinking while he fulfilled them of the happy Mary Dupré, to whose home the morrow's leisure was certain to bring him. Alas! where was the morrow which should re-unite those two divided hearts?

It required the light touch of Lady Clarice's fairy fingers, to rouse Mary from her abstraction.

"They are going to *divide* now," said she, "and we had better go home."

Mary obeyed mechanically, and before the carriage could draw up, Lord Altonby joined them.

"Have you been amused?" said he, "we had some very good speaking to-night."

"Oh, we liked it of all things, papa, and as to Mary, you never saw such a listener—especially while Clavering was speaking," and she smiled significantly.

"Ah! Miss Dupré understands these matters," said the marquis, with a sigh and a bow, the bow for his own compliment, and the sigh for his own disappointments; and, for a moment, a thought highly injurious to the interests of the tall lady—the thought that Mary would make an excellent wife to a political man, flashed through his mind. "And not too young or too flighty," thought he, "fine composed creature; sees through people in a moment; cool head; sound judgment; popular manners; every thing one could wish. But I'm too busy to think of it just now; if that d—d question was but

settled, one might turn one's mind to other things."

"Marquis of Altonby stops the way!" uttered in every gradation of bass and treble shouts, interrupted these matrimonial reflections, and the anxious politician handed his daughter and her companion into the carriage.

Just as they were driving off, a gentleman came to the door, looked up at the sky with a scrutinizing glance, and stood hesitating; apparently unable to decide whether the clouds did not portend another storm, as heavy as the one which had just passed away. Clarice's quick eye caught a glimpse of his face in the doubtful light, and her hand was instantly on the check-string.

"*We* will take him home," said she, eagerly; "it's Clavering;" then putting her head out of the carriage-window, she called to him, "Would you like a *lift*, great orator?"

"Why, yes; it was quite fine when I came

down here, so I gave no orders about getting away; though I cannot help thinking Louisa must have sent the carriage after this storm;" and he looked down the confused line of vehicles, which crowded the space by the two houses.

"Oh, never mind," said his inviter gaily, her pretty chin resting on the window's edge, and her coaxing eyes lifted to his face, "never mind the carriage,

'Let it alone, and it will come home,'

like Bo-peep's flock, in perfect safety. Come with us; you are late, Lisa will be gone to bed, and I, on the contrary, will drink to your success in a cup of hot tea in Grosvenor Place, where we are going for a little while, for the House of Commons is not up, and Lionel wont be home these two hours."

"Well, I yield," said Clavering good-hu-

mouredly, "tea is a great temptation after such a thirsty toil as speaking."

"Ah! and how well you spoke!" said Clarice, as the steps were let down.

"You are a dutiful little sister-in-law, and show great discrimination," replied the object of her compliment as he seated himself by Lord Altonby; "and I only wish ——."

What he wished was not explained, for, at that moment, Clavering became aware of the presence of Mary Dupré, and a sudden and blank pause was the consequence of his discovery.

"I beg your pardon," said he, in an earnest agitated voice; "I beg you ten thousand pardons, Miss Dupré; I was not aware ——"

"Well, never mind," said Clarice, laughing, "you are not expected to see in the dark; your eyes are not the right colour; and as it is, you have shown wonderful lynx-like qualities; I

don't believe one man in five could tell who was in the carriage at this hour, so Mary ought to feel rather flattered, instead of requiring an apology."

"I require none, I assure you," said Mary, in a sweet, and what she meant to be, a *steady* tone; "I am very happy to see Lord Clavering, and glad that he remembers me."

It was a desperate effort to be calm; to prove to her sister-in-law that they had only been slight acquaintances; but Clarice was too quick, too full of passion herself, to be deceived; and Clavering was not sufficiently master of himself at the moment, to aid her design. When he *did* speak, the tone of his voice resembled that of Mary's, at the time she first received the order for the House of Lords; and, like her, the deep sadness of the tone contrasted strangely with the common-place question—

"Were you ever in the ventilator?"

"Never."

"You should go there; you would hear your brother. I wonder, Clarice, you have never been to listen to your husband."

"Don't you know," said she playfully, "that in spite of my being papa's daughter, this is my first day of politics. Indeed, I may confess (now he is so fast asleep), that they never could make me care about that sort of thing. It worries me so not to understand it *all at once*, but if all debates were like to-night's, I should soon grow to like them."

"There is not such a comfortable place for ladies to occupy in the House of Commons, is there, Lord Clavering?" said Mary.

This second attempt succeeded better than the first; only a slight faltering over the words "*Lord Clavering*" being apparent.

"No! I do not know how Clarice would like to sit in a sort of pillory, with her head through

a small square hole, in a very large cold apartment with stone walls, and *then* only able to see a few members at a time."

"Oh, I would sit any where, and bear any inconvenience, to hear Lionel: I will ask him to-morrow. Does he speak as well as you?"

"Many people think he speaks much better," said her brother-in-law with a smile; and they relapsed into silence.

And during that silence, how strange, how dream-like seemed their meeting! Mary gazed on his face as the uncertain glare of the lamps in some passing carriage suddenly lit his features, and fancied she could trace even the slight shadows of a three years' change, so indelibly was his image stamped on her memory. Sadly, very sadly, she gazed; his face was turned from her, as well as from Lady Clarice, opposite to whom he was seated; and he seemed intently to admire the iron rails of the areas of

the different houses. What a mockery of intimacy was this short half-hour they were to spend together—half in light, and half in shade, in the same carriage—rolling towards the same home—and the only link between their fates, the laughing Lady Clarice Lyle, who stood in the same degree of relationship to *both* those separated lovers!

Oh! how little Mary thought, the day preceding Mrs. Bolton's death, when she carelessly and confidently asked William Clavering whether the beauty of Lord Altonby's youngest daughter was as great as was reported, that the day should come when Lady Clarice would have a claim on his society which *she* had not; when Lady Clarice should be to him a near and dear connexion, and Mary Dupré a stranger!

As they turned into Grosvenor Place, Clavering's eye caught Mary's fixed gaze: there are moments when silence is more irksome and

embarrassing than words: he spoke again, at random.

"You made acquaintance with Fred. Atkins at Nice; did you like him?"

"Yes," said Mary faintly, as the whole scene of agitation and confession returned to her mind.

"He wrote to me soon after you arrived there, mentioning that he had been introduced to you; he was not then aware that I also knew you. I used to be very fond of him; his is a fine and noble nature, and the world has been unable to spoil it."

Again there was silence, but this time it was of short duration, for the carriage rolled rapidly to the door of Lord Altonby's, and stopped.

"I think," said Lord Clavering, "I must leave you here, and return home."

"Oh! you promised," exclaimed his sister-in-law.

"Yes; but I had not recollected—that is—in short, I have letters to write which I must finish to-night."

"You can have tea in five minutes," said Lady Clarice, who hated to be contradicted and baffled in any point, however small.

"No thank you."

The door was opened, the steps let down, and Clavering woke his sleeping father-in-law, and assisted his two companions to descend. As Mary's hand tremblingly touched his sleeve, her head swam, and her heart ached; it seemed to her, at that moment, that any thing was more endurable than to be *nothing* to him. She, who had so steadily bid him farewell, while yet it was in his power to make her his wife, could have flung herself into his arms, now that he was lost to her for ever, and have besought him not to forsake her—to allow her to wander over

the world with him, were it but as his servant—were it but as the servant of her he loved!

The mercy of God, which hides from us the future, hides also from our fellow-creatures those wilder moments of passionate temptation, which come to our frail and sinful hearts, and lure us to our ruin; and Clavering dreamed not of the feeling that passed through Mary's mind, while she stood on the steps of the house from which he had led his bride a few months since. Only as he bid her good night, his voice faltered over the *habitual* "God bless you," which had ever accompanied their farewells; and Mary, as she echoed the words, did so in the tone of solemn and fervent prayer.

CHAPTER XV.

> I'd rather know the grave-worms on thy lips
> Than that bad woman's kisses!
>
> FAZIO.

MARY DUPRE was not destined again to be tempted by the presence of Louisa Lyle's husband. Events followed each other with startling rapidity—and she, who at the close of a three years' separation, only saw the lover of her youth, the evening they returned together

to Grosvenor Place; never again beheld him till time had mocked her memory with the change of every feature.

Lady Clarice's season of gaiety, while it at length wearied even *her* vain and restless heart, produced one effect she had not calculated upon; Lionel, though he trusted implicitly (as many men have done) to his superiority over all others, as his best security for his wife's affections, and merely thought it impossible she could like any one as well; was yet sufficiently jealous to be her constant companion whenever his more serious occupations permitted it. As he was not only clever and handsome, but fastidious and cold in his general manner, there were many to whom he was a star and an oracle; and the few whom he *did* appear actually to care about, plumed themselves upon it, and thought there must be something peculiarly praiseworthy in their own

nature, since a man could grow to care for them, who ordinarily cared for nothing but himself.

Among those who "laid this flattering unction to their souls," was the showy widow who had seized upon and married Lord Alfred Arlington: a match which his family permitted (nay encouraged) because the widow had a clear head and an excellent jointure, and Lord Alfred was an extravagant fool; and which the somewhat mature bride had herself eagerly planned, on account of the uncertain reputation she enjoyed in the world of fashion. She was a handsome woman, with an arch restless eye, a very white throat and neck, and an arm which every artist in London had modelled in marble, or cast in plaster of Paris. She was in the habit of talking rather freely, and *making eyes* at her male acquaintances, and would perhaps have been reckoned vulgar in

manner, but for the exceeding sweetness of her voice and laugh, and the moderation of *tone* in which her "good things" were said.

This lady no sooner became acquainted with Lionel, than she fell desperately in love with him; an attachment which was received rather coldly at first by its object, but afterwards appeared to the jealous eyes of Lady Clarice daily to gain ground. Her irritability was in consequence greatly increased, and as Lionel did not choose to explain to her that he had lent large sums of money to Lord Alfred, and wished to keep well with the woman who governed both his purse and his person, she set down every smile, or civil word, to an inconstant fancy for this "horrid woman," (a term applied by all jealous ladies to the fair destroyers of their happiness,) and omitted no opportunity of insulting or mortifying Lady

Alfred. The latter however, stood her ground. Too practised to be thrown off her guard; too well pleased to be put out of temper; too skilful to allow one of her own sex to baffle her; she remained, after a few cleverly-planned attempts to conciliate Lady Clarice, in a sort of civil neutrality, as far as regarded the lady, and ever ready to amuse the gentleman, with spirits as merry and mounting as the lark. She was one of those apparently "giddy creatures," who, in spite of all their giddiness, pursue their own plans with unremitting assiduity and success; who are ever laughing and talking, but never once lose sight of their point. And conscious of her own abilities, she never doubted but that Lionel would at length become attracted by her fascinations, and detached from his wife; took a tender farewell of him in her own green-house; engaged him on some frivolous pretext to write to her; and departed with

her husband (having first offered a place in her barouche to Captain Percy) to overlook their proceedings at Melton, and decide how far these imprudent and expensive pursuits suited her income or her tastes.

It was the day after the departure of her fancied rival, that Clarice wound up a long scene of worrying and reproach, by one of the most fearful bursts of passion Mary had yet witnessed. Speechless with rage, she at length snapped the chain round her slim throat to which Lionel's picture was suspended, and, dashing it to the ground, stamped on it with the fury of a child. She was proceeding to unclasp the bracelets, which had been his gift, when Lionel advancing, firmly held her hands.

"If you put yourself into those passions," said he bitterly, "I will have you shut up as a mad woman."

At these words Clarice's heart was stung;

she paused a moment, burst into a fit of shrieking and sobbing, disengaged her hands, and exclaimed—"My father! my father! it is a curse upon me for leaving my father; but I will go back—I will not remain to be insulted by wicked women, or frightened into submission by your unmanly violence,—I will be divorced from you, and I will live with Lisa and Clavering—kind, gentle, noble Clavering! *he* would not have treated me this way, if I had been wise enough to stand by my father's choice and marry *him*—I wish I had—I wish to God I had!" said she, passionately clasping her hands, and raising her streaming eyes to heaven."

Lionel's brow lowered like a thunder-cloud as he stepped nearer his wife; and Mary flung herself between them.

"Oh! Lionel," said she, "have patience with her! Tell her she is mistaken about Lady

Alfred—and you, Clarice, retract those foolish, —those wicked words—and be friends again."

But her appeal only increased the fury of the incensed Clarice.

"It is because *you* are here," said she, "that we never *are* friends; Lionel can treat me as he pleases, and then you can both amuse yourselves all the evening talking over my faults. There is always some one to meddle and encourage him—sisters-in-law and old maids always do mischief, and my life is made miserable by you. And as to *wicked* words, I have only spoken the truth; and if you spoke your wishes with the same sincerity, *you* would wish yourself with Clavering too;—you can't hear his name without colouring, and he dar'n't come near me, because you are here. It is *you* who have made Lionel hate him, and disunited our whole family; I don't choose you to stay here, I won't bear it ——"

"Silence!" said Lionel, in a tone of thunder.

But when the stormy scene had been followed, as usual, by a passionate reconciliation—when those two wayward and selfish hearts had once more vowed to be all in all to each other—when Clarice's winding arms stole round Lionel's neck, and her soft curls touched his cheek, as she murmured, "I am sure if I did not fancy Mary always made things worse, I should never be so passionate;"—no word checked her—no remonstrance was urged.

Mary left the house of that brother, for whose sake she had relinquished so much, and went to board with a lady who had female pupils and lodgers at Hastings.

It is true that Lady Clarice repented both her speech to Mary, and the effect of it; and she wrote to say so, after a few weeks had shown her how little the banishment of her

gentle and kind-hearted sister-in-law added to her domestic comfort. They had gone down to Moreton, and Lionel was about to gather round him his usual friends, amongst whom she doubted not "the Lark" and his bride would be included. And her surmise proved correct. Lionel informed her that Lady Alfred would probably spend some days at Moreton Park, and as he spoke, he kissed her crimson and indignant cheek, and said: "I wonder my lovely Clarice can think it possible I should prefer any woman's society to hers."

But *words*, let them be ever so kind and conciliatory, are nothing when opposed to *deeds*. When Lady Alfred *did* come, to ride, and walk, and gather flowers in the conservatory, she certainly engrossed more of Lionel's society than was at all consistent with the coaxing speech of preference we have given

above: and Clarice's passionate remonstrances were met with a vehemence of anger which nearly equalled her own.

It was after one of these scenes that Clarice wrote to Mary, and her prayer for the return of her sister-in-law was as imploringly humble, as her sentence of banishment had been offensive. "Come back," the letter ran, "come back, my own, my only true friend; only come back to me, and I will kneel at your feet and ask you to forgive me. I repent my words and my thoughts; they were mad, foolish, and unworthy; I deplore my ingratitude,—I entreat of you, as you value my happiness, to come to me before my heart is utterly broken."

Mary wrote the gentlest of denials; she did not say what an effort it had been originally to determine to leave her home; she did not state the impossibility of depending on the

irresolute and violent feelings of one who could wound her by such bitter words as those spoken on that eventful evening; she soothed,—she advised,—she comforted,—but she did not return.

Again Lady Clarice wrote:—"When I got your letter, cruel friend, I was sitting in *your* room, which I had had prepared for you, with all the late flowers I could find in the garden; I thought you would come; I thought I should see your kind pale face, and be allowed to weep on your bosom; I sate by the cheerful fire, and felt hopeful and joyous as I used to do. But instead of you, to receive nothing but that letter,—oh, Mary! you never can know how it wrung my heart! And even now I cannot believe that you will not come; I cannot believe that you will leave me to myself; I cannot believe that you will not plead with Lionel against that wily treacher-

ous woman. Every day I shall have your fire lit, and your room arranged as if you were occupying it, and I shall come and sit here and wait for you. You *will* come back, Mary? — What can I say or do to prove to you that I am penitent? I can hear them laughing in the conservatory, — *my* husband and that wretched woman;—and all this while Captain Percy talks to me of my altered spirits, and follows me about the house like a dog;—and my baby is ill,—he was in convulsions two days ago, and Lionel walked out with Lady Alfred, while I was sitting shivering with terror and sorrow by his bed-side; and instead of pitying me, he said Lady Alfred told him teething fits were very common! *She* speak of my baby to him! Oh! if she ever has children, I hope they will die — or live to be a shame to her! I hope *she* will sit alone by their bed, while her idiotical hus-

band is gambling on the race-course. No, Mary, I don't hope it;—I know you will think me wicked,—I am going to try and pray.—I will go and sit in the nursery, (for I seldom go down now, because I hate her so,—I hate her smile, and the way she presses my hand, I feel as if she were mocking me all the time.) Pray, PRAY come back to me, Mary; you *can* soothe Lionel,—you *can* manage him, and *I* am nothing in my own house."

To this letter was appended a hurried P.S.

"Lionel has just come to me with a London physician for my boy, and the physician is to stay in the house till Charles has got through his teething. I thought (whatever change may be in his heart for *me*,) he *must* still love his child; and he sate a long time with me, and told me he had sent to town that very day when I thought him so cruel and so careless, for some clever and skilful

man to be with me, and see baby constantly. Now, if *you* will only come back, Mary, I shall feel happy.

"CLARICE."

But Mary, though she wept over the letter, remained at Hastings. She knew Clarice so well now; she knew the buoyant *springiness* of her disposition, the mobility of all feeling good or bad; and the ease with which, after her passion was over, she resumed her natural vivacity and joyousness; so that her wild and mournful appeal, though it touched her sister-in-law's heart, had no effect on her resolution. And she was right.

The morning on which Lady Clarice wrote that letter, was spent in bitter tears; but the evening (after the momentary kindness of Lionel about his son and heir,) was one of wild mirth; and the grave physician was astonished to see the young and anxious mother, whose

distress on their first interview had so affected him, singing a number of merry Neapolitan songs, and mimicking the style common among the lower orders of the people in that land of music, fair Italy; for the amusement of her husband's Melton friends, and the especial gratification of Captain Altamont Percy.

Mary's existence meanwhile was dull and cheerless. She had taken up her abode with the lady we have mentioned, that she might avoid living actually alone; a plan, which neither her income nor her age (in spite of Clarice's opinion of her being almost an old maid,) appeared to her to justify. She had nothing to look forward to, and much wherewith bitterly to feed her memory, and the result was a settled and grave melancholy. Occasionally too, doubts would steal over her mind, whether she had indeed done for the best, in al-

lowing Lionel to sway *her* destiny, instead of her being able to guide and shape *his*; painful doubts and remorseful thoughts respecting Clavering, the noble and trusting Clavering, wrung her heart; and as she sate unseen, her head buried in her hands, at the little reading-desk which she had brought from Madeira, the question was ever at her lips, "Have I done well, my father, in the measure of my obedience? have I indeed fulfilled your command in the spirit, as well as to the letter of its injunctions? or is it all a delusion, a temptation of the mocking fiend? I might have married Clavering, and while *I* could have been ever near the wayward, and yet most loveable Clarice; Lionel would have received from *him*, such guidance and control, as respect and regard would have given him power to exert. It is impossible that they should not have become

friends at last! Have I done well, my father? or have I, foolishly and miserably for myself and others, perverted your dying intentions?"

But after a while these doubts were repelled. Mary felt conscious, that however mistaken, her efforts had been for the right; that no selfish weakness had mingled with her plans; and that after God, she had loved the brother committed to her care by her departed father. Her mind recovered its tone; no sorrow which is unmingled with self-reproach, can weigh heavily for ever, and at all moments; and Mary awaited the future, allotted to her by the All-seeing Disposer of events, with meek and quiet resignation.

Occasionally, in her strolls along the seashore, she would request the companionship of one of the little pupils domesticated in the same house with herself; and it was an amusement and an interest to her to watch the

growth of those eager minds, and instruct them, in her own gentle way, in the paths of pleasantness and peace. During one of these walks it was, that she again encountered the beautiful Annie Morrison. The eye of the little actress sparkled, her face had recovered its bloom and freshness, and she was looking up at a little child she carried on her shoulder. Mary involuntarily stopped, as she drew near; but after one hurried glance, Annie Morrison walked on; ceasing however the laugh and song, with which she had been addressing her little burden, and setting him gravely on the sands, to walk by her side.

"Isn't that a pretty woman?" said Mary's girlish companion; "that is the wife of the manager of the Hastings theatre,—and she is thought so beautiful, that many artists have taken her picture, and there are prints of her at all the libraries. She acts beauti-

fully, oh! so beautifully; and sings like a nightingale. We were all taken by our kind governess to see her, last summer."

Mary sighed; she remembered the day when she too had been to the Hastings theatre; that day which had led to the discovery of Lionel's selfish baseness; and her heart recoiled from the painful memory.

When she returned home, she found a note lying on her table in Annie Morrison's handwriting; she broke the seal; and read as follows:—

"I did not like—I did not *dare* to stop and speak to you to-day, because I am too well-known here, and the little girl who was walking with you, might have repeated to her governess that you knew me; and people would wonder and blame, that *you*, the respected and beloved sister of Lionel Dupré, should

know *me*, the principal actress of Hastings. But if, any day when you are walking *alone*, you would let me see you, and speak to you for a little while, it would be a very, *very* great pleasure to me. I think you will not refuse me this; I saw that you stopped to-day, and my heart beat quickly and fondly, though I passed on. I am grown cautious and steady, and even seeing *you* did not surprise me into showing my feelings.

"I am now married to Mr. M., the gentleman who spoke my apology that miserable night, four or five years ago. I think I have done right, I wanted protection; the profession I have entered requires it. I have nothing to complain of. He is the most gentle, generous, kind-hearted person possible, and well educated; being natural son to a gentleman, who brought him carefully up, but dying suddenly without a will, left him

destitute. He is very fond of me, and when once I can grow to forget the past, I am sure I shall feel perfectly contented.

"P.S. Is not my boy a pretty creature? Poor little Frank was prettier still, but *this* is very dear to me.

"Yours gratefully and respectfully,

"ANNIE M."

Mary *did* see and speak to the little actress, and admired the delicacy of feeling which had prompted her to walk so gravely on, rather than compromise her friend. She saw her but once, for a London engagement having been offered to Mr. M., for himself and wife, he gladly accepted it: and this interview was the only occurrence which broke the monotony of her present existence.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Thou hast betrayed me! *Thou*, in whom I trusted—
To whom my heart lay open, as a flower
Which woos the sun to gaze upon its face—
Thou, who didst make my love for other things,
Seem weak and poor and childish!—Still I seek
For some reproach to sting thee to the core;—
But in my wonder at thy treachery,
Find only that word—THOU!"

THE storm and the lull followed each other in alternate succession at Moreton, till at length one grievous and vexatious circumstance united the sympathies of all parties. A dissolution of parliament took place; and Lionel, after a contest, in which he spent an immense deal

of money, lost the election for A. Lady Clarice, partly from bitterness of feeling at home, and partly from natural carelessness, had as utterly forgotten the electors of A., as if no such people existed. The Truemans, the Hemings, the Prudhoes, accustomed to the steady and persevering kindness and attention of Mary, and ignorant of the cause of Lady Clarice's neglect, were delighted at having at length obtained an opportunity of mortifying "that proud puss," who never even came into the town, much less gave an opinion as to the growth of the eight little Prudhoes, or the beauty of the infant Heming. Every man whose petition to have his son made tide-waiter, or his nephew clerk in the customs, or himself a supernumerary in some crowded department, had been thrown aside; or had received a cold and unconciliating answer; eagerly stood forward against the useless member who had *only*

represented them; *their* idea of a man elected "to *serve* in the present parliament," evidently being, that he should serve every individual voter, and procure a place for every separate supporter, who had helped to procure him *his* place in the House of Commons. Lionel's end answered, and his return insured at the last election, he cared little how his voters liked him, and his long absence and subsequent neglect, had allowed the enemy's faction to gain so much strength that it crushed him at last.

Bigley, the long-forgotten, scorned and braved Bigley, came up from Norfolk, and worked like the mole; unseen himself, and only known by the effect of his labours; and as Lionel passed from the hustings, tired, pale, and exhausted, as much from disappointment as fatigue; his secret foe walked towards him in a swaggering, bullying manner, and repeating the words Lionel himself had used, on

the occasion of their quarrel, while a triumphant gleam shot from his small blue eye, he muttered,

"How do you like the work of a *yellow-wigged Norfolk attorney?*"

Lionel was already suffering under intense irritation, and without a word of answer, he lifted his arm, and with one powerful blow, felled Mr. Samuel Bigley to the pavement. His head struck against the curb-stone, and was cut open in the most frightful manner.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he brought an action for damages against Lionel, and in this, whatever he might have been in the former one, he was eminently successful.

Lionel's affairs, indeed, began to look desperate. As long as he was in parliament he was a creditable and accredited man; but after the loss of his election, and the very awkward and disagreeable story of the "Infamous and Unprovoked Assault" on the person of Mr. Samuel

Bigley, and more especially after a report had been spread (by this much-injured gentleman), that it was the intention of Mr. Dupré to start for the continent, and reside abroad, now that he had no present motive for a residence in England; his creditors became clamorous, and pressed upon him. The architect who had altered the family mansion at Moreton Park had never been paid, nor had any of the bills incurred at that time. Large sums had been squandered at Melton, at Doncaster; money had been lent to divers needy friends, who were quite as pennyless now, as when they borrowed it: and, above all, one drunken night, Lionel had been persuaded to sign over bonds to Lord Alfred, by which the latter was to come into immediate possession of thirty thousand pounds, and to repay the sum at his leisure. To these difficulties might be added, the minor extravagances in which Lady Clarice indulged, and the

sort of "open house" Lionel had kept, whenever he was at Moreton. In short, he was nearly ruined. Lady Clarice gave up her diamonds—Moreton Park was to be sold—and Lionel Dupré went up to Jermyn Street, with the firm intention of doing as had been reported, viz. settling abroad, as soon as he should have arranged his affairs in London. For this purpose Jack Conolly was summoned, and by his assistance Moreton was sold for about two-thirds of its original value, and such of the creditors as were most clamorous, were partly satisfied. Lord Altonby was requested to make some settlement on his daughter, and a loan was attempted to be negociated for Lionel, till such time as Lord Alfred should repay the sum owing; but this scheme fell to the ground.

After their arrival in town, Lionel's temper became unbearable. He drank deeply (which had formerly been of rare occurrence), and was

often absent from home. Lady Clarice loved him still; she *tried* to be patient, but patience was not in her composition; and bitter words were exchanged between them. At length, the day of open rupture came; as lovely a summer's day as ever shone; Lady Clarice had endeavoured to persuade Lionel to drive her in his cab to Kensington, where some rare and very curious china, lately imported, was exhibited for sale—it was a rarity, an event, and one which made no little sensation among the fair lovers of such trifles in London. Lionel refused, somewhat coldly; he pleaded his wish that she should avoid expensive purchases; and, finally, when the drive at least, without the china, was insisted upon, he impatiently declared he had business in the City which would occupy his whole day, and left her. Lady Clavering was not in town, so that Clarice, whose heart was obstinately bent upon this drive to Kensington, felt puzzled as to

the choice of a companion; at length she decided upon going alone, and ordered the barouche. When she arrived at the place of her destination, a carriage was already at the gate; the blinds were drawn down to shade the sun, and she recognized the livery as that of the Arlington's. A thrill of dislike passed through her heart, as she watched to see the hated Lady Alfred descend from it; but words are inadequate to express the burning jealousy and rage which stung every nerve, when she beheld Lionel alight, hand out the lady, and proceed to transact his City business, by aiding her in the selection of various unique pieces of china!

Lady Clarice retained sufficient command of herself to assert that she had changed her mind, and to desire the coachman to return home; but once in the solitude of her own room, the frenzy of her manner resembled madness. She could not rest—she could not weep—a burning

sickness was at her heart—and she walked to and fro till the well-known step of her husband ascended the stairs leading to her apartment. Then she paused, and her eyes fixed on the door. Lionel entered—he had two small china jars, of expensive workmanship, in his hand—his countenance was worn and jaded—but Clarice looked not on him. Before he had time to explain the meaning of his gift, she flew towards him, her eyes sparkling with fury, and dashed them to fragments on the hearth. Then, with rapid and virulent abuse, she reproached him,—called Lady Alfred the vilest and basest of her sex,—expressed her loathing hatred in the most unqualified terms,—and was proceeding to her usual threat of seeking shelter with her father or sister, when Lionel, who had had *his* share of the disappointment and irritation of the day—who had assured himself of the futility of any expectation of repayment from Lord Alfred—

who had learnt that he was involved to a degree that threatened him with a prison, owing to the rascality of the Moreton agent—and who was so far innocent of the wish to give her offence, that the meeting with Lady Alfred had been purely accidental, suddenly became as pale as death with rage. He strode forward to his wife, gazed for a moment in silence, while a torrent of angry words choked her utterance, and then—

He struck her.

Lady Clarice bent not under the blow, nor started at its infliction. She became suddenly calm; and as Lionel, half in exculpation, exclaimed, "You will madden me into doing what I shall curse myself for," she motioned him to leave the room. He did so, and Clarice walked to her writing table; wrote a note, folded and sealed it with deliberate care, and, ringing for the servant, desired him to take it immediately.

The man left the room, and for an hour Clarice remained, her head buried in her hands, in fixed and stupid thought. She was roused by the opening of her chamber door.

"If you please, my lady," said the intruder, "Captain Altamont Percy is at Brighton, and they want to know whether the note should be forwarded?"

"No—yes—no; I will tell you by and by," said she; and she relapsed into a reverie. Suddenly she uncovered her face; gazed wildly round, flew up stairs, and, kneeling by her child's cot, exclaimed with passionate tears, "I am not gone—I am not gone—I dreamed myself away from you, Charles; but I am *here*, my own, my blessed boy—I am here still!"

Her sobs and shrieks woke the infant; and as the nurse lifted him from the bed to lull him to sleep again, she said, "Oh, my lady, my lady, you are very young, and trials come

to all—take the advice of an old woman, and do nothing rash; it will all come right by and by, please God; and if it doesn't, why you've done your duty."

Servants always see more of what is going on, than people choose to believe; and the nurse had seized in a moment, the train of thought which had brought Clarice to the nursery, to assure her baby that she *was not gone.* After a while she turned to her young mistress, who had in some measure checked her grief for fear of disturbing the child's rest, and pointing to its sweet quiet face as it lay in her lap, its long lashes shadowing its rose-leaf cheek, she said, with a pitying smile, "And could it come into your heart to leave a lamb like that?"

Clarice stole away after she had kissed his brow, and returned to her own room.

"No!" said she; "I will be patient. Lionel

will come and comfort me this evening—he will pray to me to forget that blow, and I *will* forget it. I will forgive all, for the sake of that sleeping cherub; and we will leave England and live at Nice,—happy Nice! or any where, so that that wicked woman cannot follow."

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